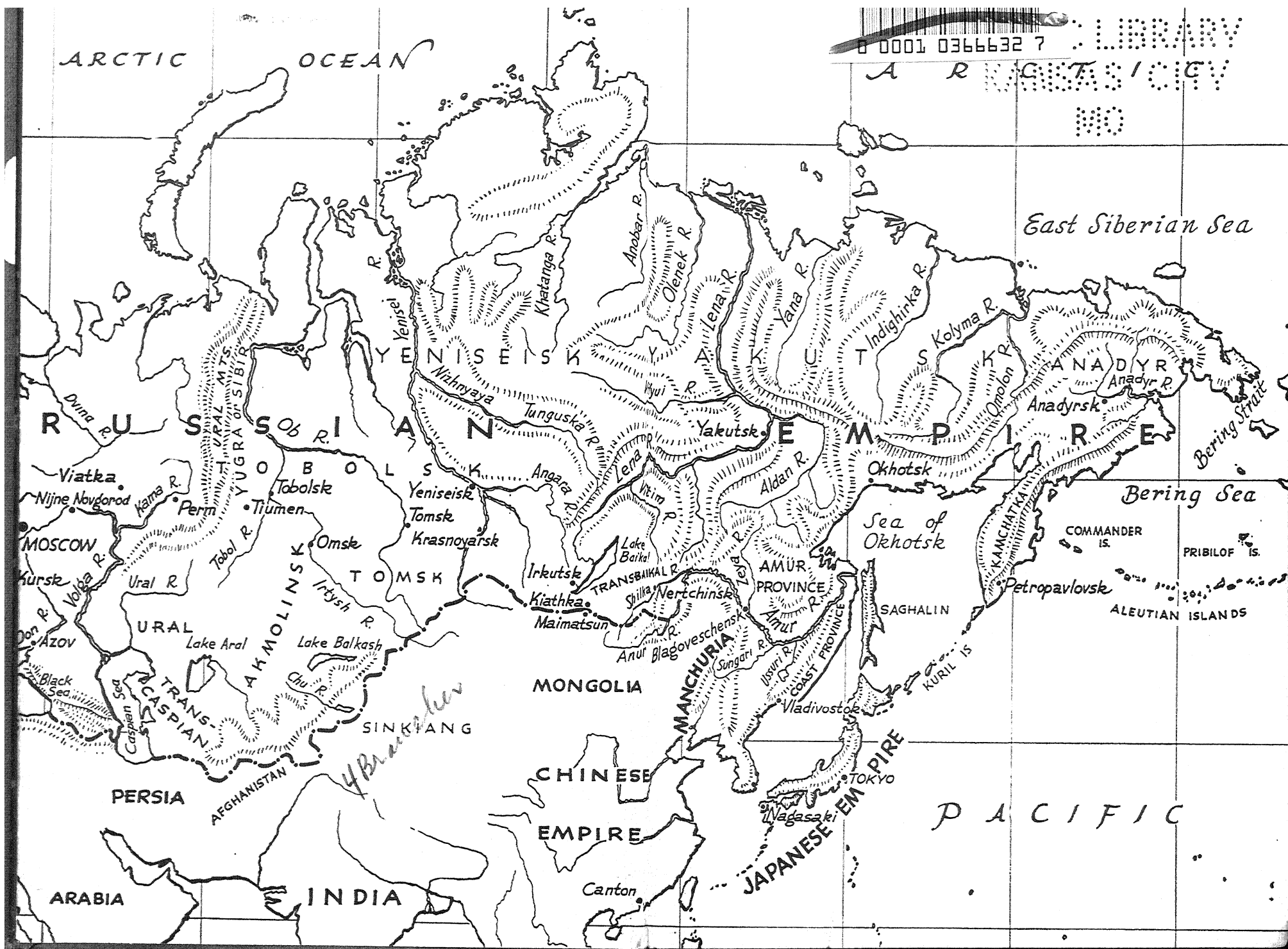




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## FROM THE VOLGA TO THE YUKON

*O Lord, you have given us mighty forests, boundless fields, and immeasurable horizons, and, we living in their midst, ought really to be giants.*

ANTON TCHERKOV

♦♦♦♦♦  
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# FROM THE VOLGA TO THE YUKON

*The Story of the Russian March  
to Alaska and California,  
paralleling our own Westward Trek  
to the Pacific*

by  
DANIEL HENDERSON



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*With Love to*  
**ERNESTINE**



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## FOREWORD

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TO MOST AMERICANS, the Russians are a remote and mysterious people, although in Siberia the Russian power is nearer than we think. We decided that it would be worth-while to view them intimately when they were marching to the Pacific and when they were occupying American territory: in Alaska, California, and in Hawaii. It occurs to us that the narrative can be used as a basis for watching whether Russian ambitions and marches, under the Czars, were different from what they will be under the Soviet Union.

No book, so far as we know, has compared the Slavic march across Siberia to Alaska, and down close to San Francisco, California, with our own western trek by way of the Overland Trail. This comparison, when opportunity has afforded, we make.

Our story of the Russian urge to the northeast—and then to sunny shores on the Pacific—begins in the times of Ivan the Terrible, Russia's first expansionist toward the Pacific. When Peter the Great continued the trek, two objectives developed: to gain the fur trade of Alaska, and the markets of China. These aims, concealed or open, we show. Along with the diplomatic side of the march, we give glimpses also of the work of the official Church and of a chain of interesting military leaders and merchants who served the purposes of empire.

The time periods of the Siberian and American discoveries are alike. The Cossack Yermak, employed by the salt merchant

Stroganov, who in turn was under obligations to Ivan the Terrible, set out in 1581 to conquer the Tartar-held land beyond the Urals. Sir Francis Drake, two years before, claimed a stretch of the Pacific Coast for Queen Elizabeth.

This is an informal book—it may be asked, is it dependable as history. We trust that, to the scholar, it will so reveal itself. We assure the general reader that we have taken pains to make it a true account. When we have created conversations between characters, we have based them on historical facts.

The only sheerly fictional characters in the story are the Russian priest Alexis, the little family of Martin and Natalya Stroganov and her father, and the reporter Del Norte. A journalist named Del Norte contributed reports to a San Francisco newspaper of the ceremony of the transfer of Alaska, and we have imagined his character, and used him as a device for bringing out certain information.

We hope our book will invite the reader to find his own parallels in American history with characters of the Russian march. For instance, what early American colonizers are akin to the salt merchants Stroganov? What exploring hunter and guide does the heroic Cossack Yermak resemble? What early American fur-trader compares with Shelikov? And with what imperialistic American army officer may Muraviov, who snatched from China for Russia that important waterway to the Pacific—the Amur River be compared?

Whether or not you will quiz yourselves, you will find that these Russian marches to China and America were a grand quiz, and you may ask yourself, as we are forced to do at the end of the book, whether the quiz will ever be so completely settled that we can dismiss it from our minds.

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*PART ONE*

**COSSACK SURGE IN SIBERIA**

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# UNCLE SAM TAKES TITLE TO A GREAT LAND

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## CHAPTER I

A TALL, SLIM young man with keen, darting eyes and a sharp nose that seemed to have been given him to sniff news lolled against a stanchion on the lurching little steamer *John L. Stephens*, and puffed at a pipe whose smoke blended with the wisps of mist floating across the deck. He wore a Byronic black tie and was clothed in the tweediest of new tweeds.

The bushy-whiskered captain on the bridge of the steamer tinkled his bell; the propeller churned; and the vessel drew away from the crude wharves and climbing streets of Seattle and headed toward the Inside Passage to Alaska. The landmarks of the Olympic and Cascade Mountains faded. The Inside Passage opened.

Our young man, who had stood aloof in the run from San Francisco to Seattle, became active now. His eyes had finished their roving. He had noted both the people in the cabins and in the steerage, and he knew just what persons along the rail he desired to interview. Writing under the name of Del Norte for the lively young San Francisco newspaper *Alta California*, he liked the name he had chosen, and hoped to make it famous. Under

his apparent languor, he was throbbing with an ambition to show the Bohemians of his city that Bret Harte was not the only Californian who could present a character and scene tersely and vividly.

As to interviewing celebrities, he had been shocked to find that the conspicuous persons aboard were just second and third rate. Where was Secretary of State Seward, who had been the prime mover in the purchase of this new territory in the north? Where was the distinguished Senator Sumner, who had supported Seward in the Senate by a learned and brilliant oration which had made it appear that Seward, in purchasing Alaska, was not as wasteful of the public funds as he had seemed to be? The reporter began to wonder if his editor would permit him to gibe at statesmen who would not back up their beliefs by undergoing the physical discomfort of visiting the new coast so highly estimated in rhetorical phrases.

Del Norte went among each group and summed them up to himself.

Ladies—officers' wives—chattering in the cabins, delighted with the prospect of meeting a real Russian princess up in forlorn Sitka.

A lot of gold braid was on board, but it was cliquy. How queer that the general in command of the regiments of occupation had the same name as the arch-Confederate statesman, Jefferson Davis. This Federal officer must have had a hell of a time during the war between the North and South.

Prospectors in fisheries and real estate. Hairy men in loud, checkered shirts—men whose beards flowed down to mingle with the bushes on their breasts; men whom nature appeared to have made hirsute for living in the country of the grizzly.

Little men in caps, or wearing stiff hats to which they clung against the snatching wind. Poker-players—competitors in trade in San Francisco and Seattle; competitors now at cards, and rivals still when the time would come to bid on the machinery and supplies of the withdrawing, fur-trading, Russian-American Company.

One or two prosperous-looking men of the banker type—evidently New Englanders who had won financial control over

California after the gold rush days. Del Norte was most curious about these smooth, unobtrusive individuals who ate at the captain's table, their pressed broadcloth so companionable with the gold braid of General Davis's staff.

The heavy, all-pervading smell of spruce overcame the stink of burned-out cigars and stale liquor. The drifting, chilling mist formed gray, fantastic framings for scenic beauty. Del Norte thought of a picture he had seen of a Carolina liveoak draped in wisps of hanging moss, and found a likeness to it in the spruce trees along the channel from which filaments of mist trailed.

What a bewilderment of islands—how marvelous that the skipper could find the true channel among so many alluring but false leads!

The steamer stayed close to land. Vancouver Island was skirted. Queen Charlotte Sound was reached, and then began many miles of open ocean, with seasickness for shamefaced army officers and their ladies. Then again, the calm channel with shores thronged by spruce.

Jackson, the first mate, was sociable between critical moments, and helped the passengers forget their upheaved stomachs by pointing out, in Tolmie Channel, bear and deer swimming close to the steamer in their crossing between cliffs.

Everybody on board knew that Del Norte was a reporter by the way he scribbled when he saw the first salmon cannery at Ketchikan, built two years before. The officers' wives thought that he was a smart young man to discover that the Indian name for the village meant "spread wings of prostrate eagle."

Totem-poles attracted the passengers from their drinks, cards, and chit-chat, but Del Norte gave these symbols up as too mysterious for inquiry at the moment, and merely recalled something that he had heard—that the totem-poles did not greatly develop until the white men brought steel chisels to the Tlingits.

At Wrangell—on the north side of the island of that name—he observed that the army officers gave the harbor close attention. He decided that Uncle Sam contemplated founding a post at the place, where more than a quarter-century before, the Russians built a stockade to turn back the Hudson's Bay Company's traders.

"Good-morning, Mr. Hutchinson. We're having a clammy passage. I'm Del Norte of the *Alta California*."

"Ah, indeed."

"They tell me we're off the coast of British Columbia. The British were smart as usual in taking over this territory. But the Hudson's Bay Company wasn't so smart in letting their lease lapse of part of this coast. Ever been up here before, Mr. Hutchinson?"

"Never before."

"We ought to be seeing snow-capped mountains soon. I believe you're a New Hampshire man. You New Englanders are leaders in enterprise. It must be quite a jump from the shoe business to prospecting in fish and furs up in this foggy northwest."

"Really, Mr. Del Norte, I don't care to—"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Hutchinson, but it is my business to know things and to find out things. According to the standards of the American business world, you are a person who merits fame and praise. You were keen enough to make a fortune in legitimate war contracts. Our armies needed shoes and you shod them. Now, by being aboard this vessel, you are in the glare again. My paper would be delighted to print your opinions as to whether Uncle Sam will ever get back the \$7,200,000 he paid for 'Walrussia.'"

"You will excuse me, Mr. Del Norte—I see General Davis beckoning to me."

Used to rebuffs, the reporter went to the rail and listened to the first mate in his role of informant.

"It's a bloody coast—this British Columbia. The Stikine Indians fought the Sitkan Indians, and almost wiped each other out. Then the Russian Company under Baron Wrangell had a nice little war with the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company.

"We're passing Chilkat country now. Ladies, too bad you can't go ashore and buy their fine blankets and baskets. The chiefs have gold nuggets in their houses. Reckon we Americans will come exploring down here.

"Chichagov Island—the big halibut fishing banks are off here. We're coming to Baranov Island, and then to Sitka. This is Peril Strait. Want to know why it's named so? One hundred



and fifty Aleuts died from eating poisonous mussels they got here.

"Notice on the left, the small bay we're entering. That's where old Baranov first founded Sitka fort. What a massacre! There's Japonski Island—the Russian diplomat Rezanov wanted it to be a prison island for Japanese seized by the Russians in the Kuriles. And there were indeed Japanese fishermen kept on the island.

"This is it—this is Sitka harbor. Lovely, isn't it! Here's where Captain Chirikov, Bering's companion, lost seamen. They say a Sitkan chief dressed himself in a bear's skin and lured the crew ashore. Yes, ladies, these were bloody shores—and a lot of gore may yet be spilled under our flag!"

The women weren't alarmed—there were American soldiers aboard, and American warships would be waiting in the harbor. Instead they exclaimed in admiration of Mount Edgecumbe, the snow-capped volcano which rose above misty blue hills as landmark and guardian of the town, and they bent over the rails in wonderment at the labyrinth of isles, and the grim rocks coated with weeds.

Del Norte made this note:

"The clouds now had disappeared revealing the magnificent surroundings of the harbor. Sitka is more than half-encircled by a group of cone-like mountains remarkable for their precipitous sides and sharply pointed summits. It rivals Rio de Janeiro and the finest harbors of the eastern Asiatic coast."

The steamer went surely and quickly up the narrow harbor to the wharf, and as it moved in, the curiosity of the passengers shifted from the wild scenery to the romance of ships flying the Russian and American colors.

Their skipper was skilfully finding an anchorage among trim American government ships: the steamship *Resaca*, Captain Bradford; the *Jamestown*, Captain McDougall; the Revenue Cutter *Lincoln*, Captain White; and the merchant vessel *Buena Vista* from San Francisco. Close by, in the friendliness of harbor, were Russian vessels: the *Mameluke* from the Sandwich Islands, and the two steamers and three sailing vessels belonging to the relinquishing Russian-American Company.

As the *John L. Stephens* anchored, some watchful sailor reported that a ship was following them, and foaming on their

wake came the United States warship *Ossipee*, with the belated naval contingent aboard: twenty-two commissioned naval officers with many seamen, and Captain Emmons in command of twenty-five marines.

Del Norte, ashore, was scribbling:

"Harbor hardly 100 rods wide. . . . On the right, the fur warehouses of the Company, long two-story houses painted yellow with sheet-iron roofs painted red . . . the Governor's residence . . . the churches . . . and the houses of the people. On the left, the Indian town, consisting of sixty square block cabins running in single file down the beach. Built of hewn logs with roofs of cedar bark and no windows—a blend of savage and civilized taste.

"The island Baranov on which the city is built, is eighty-four miles long, with an average width of twenty miles. The residents, with creoles, number 886. The Indians (Kolosh) number 1128.

"Passing up the street, and leaving the Governor's house on a rock bluff to the right, we come to the custom-house, the business offices, and the storehouses for the Company's supplies. Then we come to a small plaza in which stands the Greek church, a spacious structure with a spire of oriental style in front, and a large dome in the center of the roof of the edifice. The spire has a chime of bells, and is ornamented with an ancient clock face. The Greek church roof and dome are deep green and the window-frames and doors are white. The body of the church is blue slate color.

"Nearby is the Lutheran church, built and used by Finlanders—dissenters from the Greek Orthodox Church.

"Beyond the churches stands the clubhouse, for unmarried officers, the schoolhouse, the hospital, and various workshops and a small foundry. Near this one street of the town are small alleys bordered with the houses of the settlers. There is a small sawmill on a stream.

"The street runs towards the beach and runs on to the only road that leads from town. Following the shore, it stops at the base of a mountain. This is a pleasant walk—the fashionable promenade."

The shipyard was busy—the spirit of the practical Peter the Great would have approved of its completeness of facilities and tools. The first steamship launched on the Pacific had been built here.

Some of the workshops were idle, because experiments in manufacture had failed. It was a creditable aim to make bricks for the great Russian wood-stoves, and to convert the raw wools from California into shawls and blankets; but for success it was necessary to import skilled labor from Europe, and this was very costly. Besides, how could such craftsmen be induced to stay in this harsh lonely country remote from their beloved arts? Yet something had been done in iron. The plantations in California and Mexico had benefited by the plowshares, hoes, rakes, axes, and knives produced in these shops.

There were cheering sounds coming from the bell foundry. This was a pleasing enterprise. Just as the bells from this foundry chimed in the bell-tower of the Sitkan cathedral, they chimed for Russian and Spanish churches and monasteries from Bering Strait clear down to Mexico. Races differ, but bells mingle.

The American officers and their wives were delighted guests at the clubhouse which former Governor Etolin had built for the single officers. The women liked the samovar, and found the tea so pleasant that they were rather glad that it would be an insult to refuse a tumbler or a cup. As for the men, the first Russian invitation, “petnatchit copla”—fifteen drops—with cognac or vodka starting a flow of wines and spirits, was a challenge what American officer would decline?

Del Norte found it amusing to study the social distinctions at the receptions and balls. The *polupotchetnui*—the very honorables—were there, of course. But the *potchetnui*—the merely honorables—were there also, although their offices were those of petty officers, bookkeepers, and clerks.

Del Norte made note that the American soldiers were kept on board the *John L. Stephens* until the time of the ceremonies of transfer, and were unhappy about it. Being turbulent fellows—not used to the discipline of their brothers of the Navy, who were confined on the warships—the complaints were heard on land.

The traffic with the Kolosh who came out in canoes to trade had lost its thrill.

Their surliness deepened when petty officers told them that they should be glad to be quartered on a ship, where a man could get a comforting drink, because there were no rum-shops ashore.

"There will be liquor when we take over," the soldiers said.

What was the Indian attitude to the transfer? The special correspondent had found a lively topic here. Inquiring into the battles Baranov had fought with the Sitkan Kolosh, he was tempted to write a history about the bloody, conquering days of this Russian-American Company. The high stockade running across the front of Baranov Castle, the sentry walk around it, and the feudal towers at each end—what a dramatic story must lie behind them! It was a story that had impressed General Davis, for Del Norte heard the officer speak forebodingly of the prospect of good relations between his soldiers and the Indians.

"The Russian governors," said the General, "have prejudiced the natives against us, not foreseeing that we would take over here. They told the Kolosh that Yankee skippers came up to make them drunk and cheat them. And now the Indians think we're cheating them on a huge scale, because we're paying \$7,200,000 to the Russians instead of to them. They say it's their territory; that it's being sold without their consent, and that they haven't received a dollar from the sale. I hear that their fiercest chiefs threaten to drive out the 'Boston men,' as they call us."

The newspaper man contributed this drop of cold comfort:

"From what I have heard of some of the whalers from New England, devout men in their own home towns, they surely gave these tribes cause to hate us. Strong drink and syphilis—two nice gifts to our Indian brothers from the land of the Puritans."

General Davis turned away. Why were newspaper men so brutally frank?

He was to put himself at the mercy of these newspaper fellows when, two years later, he hospitably gave Chief Cholcheka a cast-off army uniform and two bottles of American whiskey. Wearing the uniform and carrying the bottles, Cholcheka felt that no common soldier should challenge him as he went into a part of

the fort forbidden to Indians. The sentry kicked him, and a series of Kolosh outbreaks began.

Making a thorough job of reporting, Del Norte then dipped into the religious side of Sitkan life. To services in both the official and the dissenting church he went.

The Bishop of Kodiak had arrived to give spiritual comfort to the Russians surrendering their homes, and he held a solemn service in the Greek church. The special correspondent, with blank cards held in his palm as he bowed in the pew, scribbled that the Bishop was gowned in figured white satin with gold lace trimmings, and that the attending priests wore green brocade, and that the audience, chiefly composed of Russians and creoles, made the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast, and kissed the floor. To give a religious glow to his story he made note of the altars, desk, chandeliers, images, paintings, and of the chanting of the choir.

When the Army chaplain, the Reverend Rainier, announced that he would hold service in the little Lutheran church, Del Norte attended. After the simple service he chatted with the parson, and made a note that Rainier had been an overland pioneer from Ohio to Oregon in the wake of Marcus Whitman and, having been the first American minister to preach in Portland, was also the first American minister to preach in Alaska.

October 18, 1867.

The transfer was to take place at 3:30 in the afternoon, in front of the Governor's house on the hill. The tall staff in front of the imposing building—Baranov's Castle—had taken on a new significance for all elements of the population. To the Company's managers and minor officials it meant the end of a career or a living, and the problem of finding new jobs in Siberia or old Russia.

Life in these rough seas had not fitted them for farm work or city tasks.

The Kolosh wondered: would the Double Eagle of the Russian emperor really come down? The dreadful Baranov had lost many

men and killed many Kolosh to plant that pole on the hill and raise the flag.

Would the great white chief in Washington whom the Boston men called "Uncle Sam" be easy to deal with? Why had he not sent them money, clothes, beads, and liquor to pay them for the land over which he was raising his red-white-and-blue flag?

Above the stunted spruce and alders of the natural hill fortress the mists of afternoon gathered, and people began to appear through the haze. Prince Maksoutov had ordered Captain Alexei Pestchourov, in command of the Russian troops, to appear in uniform at three. A hundred of them, they formed on the parapet at the right of the fir mast over which, one hundred feet up, their flag rippled.

General Davis had commanded Major General L. H. Rosseau, U.S.A., to land his men in full dress from the *John L. Stephens* at the same hour. They came ashore and formed at the left of the flagstaff.

Alongside of grave Prince Maksoutov and Vice-Governor Gardishov stood General Davis, and the commanders of the official American ships.

The *John L. Stephens*, no doubt as an influence for tranquillity, lay opposite the Indian town. When the soldiers disembarked, the Kolosh leaped into their canoes, rounded the anchorage, and crowded up to the wharf to watch the mysterious ceremony.

As the moment approached, some Russian employes who had obtained vantage-points gave them up and went to their homes.

"I cannot be present at the death of my country," one man said.

"Yes," said another who went with him, "there will be many tears shed tonight in Sitka."

Princess Maksoutov could not bear to see her country's flag come down, or to have her five little ones watch the surrender. The ladies around her felt as she did. They had been as brave as was necessary in coming out to this far coast, and through their sacrifices they had become attached to the wildly-beautiful place. But to stand and see the Double Eagle come down without weeping was more than they could command of their hearts. They would watch from a window.

Sentiment, however, did not deter the Russian officers from sharply performing their duty.

The special correspondent was curious as to the emotions of the Governor. He was a handsome, affable dignitary, and Del Norte felt that there was a good story in the nobleman who had come out three years before to wind up the Company's affairs for the dissatisfied Imperial Government.

In the war between England and Russia, a British fleet under Admiral Price had bombarded Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka coast, and Prince Maksoutov, guarding the Company's Siberian interests, had commanded one of the batteries that repelled the attack. He bore the marks of the wound he had received while loading a cannon.

The Russian captain spoke crisply, commanding that the Double Eagle be hauled down. There was a faltering of the colors, blowing stiffly in the brisk wind. The banner, as if with reluctance, clung to the ropes, high up.

The man at the foot of the staff tugged and hauled, but the flag would not come down. Pestchourov ordered a sailor to climb the pole and release it. The agile fellow climbed and detached the standard.

Now there was more embarrassment. The official called up to the climber to hold the flag and bring it down with him, but the wind dissipated the sound of his words. The man dropped the banner, and it fluttered down on the agitated bayonets of the Russian soldiers.

The guns on the *Ossipee* saluted the lowering flag that was symbolic of the withdrawing nation. The Russian flagship and the battery on the wharf roared in answer.

The Stars and Stripes ascended the pole, making a richer blaze before the dismal castle. The customary salutes followed. The few Americans present tactfully concealed their joy.

Saluting the American commander, Pestchourov spoke the tremendous words:

"By authority from His Majesty, Emperor of all the Russias, I transfer to the United States the territory of Alaska."

In similar terms, the American commander received the country.

The Russian soldiers bore their flag reverently to its locker.

The effect on the Russians and creoles was like that which had roused the French people of New Orleans when Louis XV and La Pompadour sold their beloved Louisiana to the Spaniards. How could a worshiped monarch be so blind to the loyalty of far-away subjects? Russians looked up, between moist eyelashes, to the Princess. She held herself proudly, but when a moment later she withdrew they knew that she was in tears.

Del Norte was asking, "What next?" Did the American and Russian officers need a newspaper man to tell them that there should be some public demonstration of good-will between the two nations? This affair was disgustingly formal and dry. Where was the boasted Russian hospitality—the champagne and caviar? Ah, the idea had come to them. There was indeed to be a feast and a ball.

The hilarity began in the late afternoon, as early gloom settled upon the town.

The Czar's dignitaries came. The Bishop and his priests attended in their long velvet robes, their necks circled by the ribbons of their crosses. The Russian and American military mingled. In a handsome apartment adjoining the spacious dining-hall, the ice was broken.

Upon a side-table in the reception-room liveried servants spread sparkling platters filled with fish, caviar, ham, bread and butter, profusely fringed by brandy, wines, and cordials.

The formal dinner followed, with champagne flowing. Toasts were drunk to the Czar, the President of the United States, Prince Maksoutov, Secretary Seward.

The dance followed. The wife of General Davis stood between the two American generals, and received the guests with a nice blend of dignity and sociability. With her were the wives of Colonel Weeks, Major Wood, Naval Captain McDougall, and Mr. Dodge, the new Collector of Customs. Mrs. Rainier, wife of the Chaplain, was in the party.

Princess Maksoutov, standing close to the Americans, received with brave gaiety. There were six Russian ladies in her group,



including the wife and daughter of the Vice-Governor. Their costumes scintillated with costly jewels.

It delighted the American women that the Princess and her ladies had made a courteous gesture by adopting for the occasion the American hair-do. The little cap usually worn by the Russian ladies had been abandoned, and the hairdresser had done the hair with curls hanging down the sides in the manner of a coiffure that had come excitingly out of the latest Godey's Lady's Book.

Even more brilliant than the gowns of the ladies were the uniforms of their escorts. The Russian officers' clothes shone with gold and silver bullion, and their projecting breasts were gallant with military decorations: the medals of St. George, Vladimir, and Stanislaus.

The Russian national air and the *Star-Spangled Banner* were played and applauded. The musicians of our Army and Navy blended their pieces nicely with those of the Russian band. The music and the champagne drove away the gloom of going and the gloom of coming.

In a private party, in the small hours of the morning, some of the Russian minor officials decided to show the American guests "an old Siberian custom." Perhaps the curious special correspondent, in a world blissful with champagne, had urged the revival of the custom of which he had had intimations.

Emerging from a group of jovial Muscovites, the Prince Maksoutov spoke to the American officers with a mixture of mockery and earnestness.

"Gentlemen, you may fear the worst. In deference to you, I have requested that the first victim be a Russian, but who will follow I cannot tell. If one or more of you have been very popular with my people, he is in grave danger. I warn you against international complications—and broken necks! Stand near the door, and be ready to retreat if they dash in your direction. Behold, you are about to see what we Russians call *podkeedovatel'*!"

To the Americans, the clashing syllables suggested massacre, and out of the battle of bumpers they emerged watchful.

There . . . the outbreak had begun. A half-dozen portly, crimson-faced Russians had seized a Russian lieutenant, and with a

swing and rhythm born of long practice were tossing him up to the ceiling with such force that it seemed he would go through the roof, but fortunately he was used to the merry ordeal and held himself limply and turned with the agility of a trapeze artist, so that when his body collided with the ceiling, the padded parts received the shock.

Up and down, up and down, with head twisting and coat-tails flying, went the elongated human pillow, and when at last he was dropped by his admiring tormentors, the champagne flowed again.

Del Norte was standing in the fore of the officers. Suddenly he saw sweaty red faces converging on him. The podkeedovaters almost caught him, but he escaped the violent friendship.

## CHAPTER II

DEL NORTE HAD a headache the next morning, but despite the effects of the bumpers, his subconscious self had urged this question: "What was the Yankee financier Hutchinson talking to Prince Maksoutov about last night?"

As the reporter tossed in his berth other faces came to him—faces of big business men he had seen and heard in San Francisco taverns—men who had had business relations with the Governor of this Russian organization which was ready to sell its immense stores.

There was the ice magnate, J. Mora Moss, who had persuaded the Company's former Governor Rosenberg to build an icehouse by the lake at Sitka, and who had promoted the shipment of thousands of tons of ice to the towns of California.

There was the skipper from Connecticut, Captain Ebenezer Morgan, who was said to have an arrangement with this Company. There was also Captain Gustav Niebaum, an ex-captain of the Russian-American Company. It had been rumored that both of these veterans had left hurriedly for Alaskan waters; but why hadn't they appeared in Sitka? Was Hutchinson their representative?

Maybe they had gone to the seal rookeries—the Pribilof Islands

—to estimate just how much a franchise on the seal industry was worth.

And what of the little merchants that had come up on the *John L. Stephens* and on other vessels? He had seen them poking about the wharves and warehouses of the Company. The property was well guarded and all they could do was to peer through doors and windows.

Del Norte had laughed at their consternation when they discovered that there were Russian traders waiting around to bid for the goods. One grizzled fellow named Boscovitch—burly and loud—had boasted in broken English that he had an inside track, and was sure of buying a pile of sealskins that would make him rich.

However, there appeared to be opportunities for all of the traders in those big warehouses packed with furs, food supplies, and miscellaneous goods, and the reporter had heard the San Francisco men consoling each other:

"There's enough here for all. If the Prince they call Max Sutor gives us a square deal, and hasn't any prejudice against California men, we can outbid these Russian fellows and still make a good profit in our market."

Recalling these things, Del Norte decided that he'd better drink a lot of coffee and go out and cover the sale. He'd surprise the publisher of his paper by really sending in a business story.

Seeing a crowd of merchants standing outside the offices of the Company, the reporter strolled over. When he reached them they were in a ferment, for Prince Maksoutov had sent word that he was indisposed, and that the American, Mr. Hutchinson, would tell them what he had done about the sale of the property. The little traders, by this time, knew who Hutchinson was, and guessed the power of the money and influences he represented.

"This looks bad," Del Norte heard one trader say to another. "These Russian aristocrats know where the big money is. To this Prince we're as little worth noticing as the fish-heads in this skunk-hole of a street!"

Hutchinson was speaking:

"Gentlemen, I hope you won't be disappointed. When I arrived here, Prince Maksoutov told me that he could not take the trouble to sell the Company's property in small lots. The men I represent had already been negotiating with him, and I came prepared to make him an offer for the whole business.

"I now announce to you that the Company has sold to me the entire lot—with the exception of the sealskins."

Boscovitch laughed.

"Go on, clever Yankee," cried a San Franciscan. "What did you buy and what did you pay for it?"

"The sale to me includes the sheepskin coats, the brass cannon, the barrels of rum, the casks of wine, the Russian leather, the sheet copper, the lead, the Chinese tea, the drygoods, and various supplies and goods of trade. I have also bought the Company's ships. The price was \$155,000 for the lot. And now, gentlemen, I'd like you to know that I am forming a company to do business in these waters, and I wish your good will, and hope that there will be transactions between us in the future in outfitting our vessels that will more than compensate you for the trouble you took to come up here. There's a boom coming here, my friends, and maybe it will pay you while you're here to pick up some choice pieces of real estate."

The merchants listened with reluctant admiration.

"Maybe," one said, "it's worth the price of the voyage to see how the big fellows operate."

"He didn't get ahead of me," said the Russian Boscovitch. "I made my deal."

"Hooray for Boscovitch!" a merchant yelled. "He beat the Yankee financier! What did you buy, Boscovitch?"

"Sixteen thousand fur-seals at forty cents apiece!"

"Sixteen thousand fur-seals! Forty cents apiece! My God, Boscovitch, there must be something crooked going on here!"

"I would have paid two dollars apiece," said another man from the Golden Gate, "and still made a big profit."

"You can't make money out of a Russian!" another said.

It was small comfort to Little Business to hear later that the shrewd Captain Niebaum had made a deal in advance for 80,000 dried fur-seal pelts. With these as his assets, Niebaum bought his

way into the company Hutchinson was forming—The Hutchinson-Kohl Company.

The little men went back to their shops and offices, and made much talk about their voyage north. There was always some new report to freshen the account. The Company's vessel, for which Hutchinson had paid \$4000, had been sold by him later for \$10,000. Those goods for which he had paid \$155,000—he had sold them for a quarter-million.

Well, anyway, they had been frozen out by a big, smart fellow.

Boiling with ambitions, feverish for profits in the northern seas, the San Franciscans of Hutchinson's circle were dining luxuriously, and borrowing the Russian custom of bumpers.

The toastmaster read amidst roaring laughter a clipping containing extracts from a poem, "An Arctic Vision," by a young literary man who was making a name for himself—Bret Harte. Its theme was the Alaska purchase:

"Let the stately polar bears  
Waltz around the pole in pairs,  
And the walrus, in his glee,  
Bare his tusks of ivory;  
While the bold sea-unicorn  
Calmly takes an extra horn.  
Slide, ye solemn glaciers, slide  
One inch farther to the tide . . .  
All ye icebergs make salaam—  
You belong to Uncle Sam."

"Gentlemen, drink it down to President Johnson, a better friend to California than we hoped."

"Friends, a bumper to Czar Alexander, the ruler who changed Russia's mind about wanting American territory. His health in the best Muscovite brandy!"

"And now, folks, a hearty bumper to our friend in Washington—the advocate of American expansion in the northwest. The statesman who extended the United States beyond its territorial bounds!"

The glasses clinked, and mellow voices chorused: "Long live Secretary Seward!"

### CHAPTER III

LET US IMAGINE that among the workmen of the Russian-American Company at Sitka was young Martin Stroganov, a tall sturdy fellow of a distinctly Russian type. His height and fairness distinguished him from the swarthy, thickset, bushy-bearded creoles—offspring of Russian fathers and native women.

The transfer of Alaska to the United States appeared to have put Martin out of a job, but he was whistling in spite of it. He knew the sea, and had sailed under Captain Niebaum to the various trading-posts of the Company, and he was sure some company or skipper would employ him. He wondered why Captain Niebaum had not come to the sale. Whenever he felt doubtful as to what he should do, he thought of Captain Niebaum, and was assured.

Martin had been fishing, and had come in with a nice catch of cod and halibut. His father-in-law, John Johnson, had been with him, and as they drew up the canoe on the beach, Martin's pretty wife, Natalya, came down to welcome them. She had sea-blue eyes and cherry cheeks, and the wind was blowing her chestnut hair back from her vivid face. She was happy about the bulge under her apron that told the world that a baby was coming. It did not embarrass her that young Father Alexis, of the Greek Orthodox Church, was coming down to the shore from the house of the Bishop.

He joined the deferential group, and they talked of the sadness of the cession ceremony, but soon they were talking briskly about the future.

Natalya asked the clergyman if the transfer to America would disturb the Greek church.

"God must have his lighthouses along this dismal coast," said Alexis, "and I don't anticipate that our candles will be snuffed out. Our pioneer father, Veniaminov, lit a strong torch. Of course, the English-speaking Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists will come, but there won't be many at first. Perhaps the coming of American denominations will be a spur to our Synod.

"We are the official Russian Church, but we are not an exclusive

body. It is necessary, for unity of the far-spreading empire, that we have an official Church to unite our various races, but you have observed that we did not quarrel with the Lutherans when they came; and did you not observe, when the American naval chaplain held services in the Lutheran church, how Russian people attended with the Finns and Kolosh?"

"But if we moved down to the States," said Natalya, "would we find the Greek Orthodox Church there? We have heard that the new country is one of many religions, and perhaps we would find that the Roman religion was nearest to our faith."

Alexis laughed. "Our brethren of Rome brought principles of toleration to the early American colonies. There is no longer the bitter antagonism between the two branches of the Catholic Church. Church history tells us that the Latin priests, in their fight against paganism, tried to win the Slavs, but were repelled from Kiev, Novgorod, and Moscow, and it is even said that our early Greek bishops would rather have endured the careless Mongol rule than to come under the See of Rome. Later, Peter the Great drove the persistent Jesuits out of Moscow, but Catherine II wisely recognized that there were many Roman Catholics among the races of her empire, and permitted the Jesuits to instruct them.

"Maybe, Natalya, there is a lesson for you in this story: The Roman Church has a legend that Andrew, first of the twelve Apostles, ascended the Dnieper River and planted a cross on the hills of Kiev, saying, 'On these hills shall shine the light of divine grace.' Our Greek Church prevailed in Russia, but I like to think that the light kindled came indeed from Christ through Andrew."

His talk became personal. "I worry about a little family like yours—which, I discover, is going to grow."

Natalya laughed.

"I hope they will leave a doctor to bring the child into the world, and you, Father Alexis, to baptize him."

"Nicely spoken, Natalya Stroganov, but I am afraid I will work elsewhere. Tell me, Martin, are you making plans? Would you like to be a fisherman for the Bishop's house?"

"Let the Kolosh and the creoles have that job, Father. I hope to work for the new company, for I've heard the American, Mr.

Hutchinson, say that the American firm will give employment with more opportunity, better food, and higher wages. I'm sure that we can get along with the Americans. The Boston men have often come here. They are merry fellows."

Glancing from the Stars and Stripes that were contending with the fog on Castle Hill, Alexis said to the older man:

"My friend, I am sure you think your son's decision a wise one."

"Yes, Your Reverence, I came up here from a Danish colony in Minnesota. We had heard down there that these waters were teeming with fish, but what I have seen is beyond all stories and dreams.

"In '65, I sailed with Captain Matt Turner up to the Shumagin Islands, and we caught thirty tons of cod in three weeks. He got fifteen cents a pound for that salt cod in 'Frisco. Yes, sir, pardon me, Your Reverence, these are the waters for fishermen, and as proof of it we have a king salmon waiting for you—it's a thirty pounder. There are millions of salmon to be caught here every run, to say nothing of the boatloads of cod, mackerel, halibut and herring. I have written to my friend Swanson and Oleson in Minnesota. I expect some of them will soon be working for the Hutchinson-Kohl Company."

The priest listened with happy interest. The little flock had indeed found good pastures.

There was a question lurking in Martin's eyes, and Alexis waited until it was spoken.

"I take it, Father, that you will be going back to old Russia."

"Yes, Martin, I was sent out here by the head of my order on a scholarly mission. I have gathered a store of knowledge that may some day be valuable in the records of our Church."

"Will you sail, or go overland?"

"I will go across Siberia along the road our pioneers laid. I will visit the churches in the principal towns, and collect historic information."

"Might I hope—"

"Out with it, Martin. If I say no, I will do it gently."

"My name is Stroganov, and I have heard that there was a salt



merchant and colonizer of the same name whom the Czar befriended and honored. I would be proud to tell my little son—or will it be another Natalya?—that I am descended from him. Could it be traced on the church rolls?”

“There have been many churches built across Siberia,” said the priest, “by men who were cruel and sinful and hoped by putting stone on stone to hide their sins. They gave the first furs to the Church as ‘God’s sables,’ and spent the last to enjoy the works of the devil. Be careful of family trees.

“Yes, there was Stroganov the salt merchant and colonizer, and there was Prince Stroganov, who was one of the Czar’s ministers when the diplomat Rezanov founded the Russian-American Company, but your connection with them by blood would be hard to trace.

“Be content, Martin, to think that you belong to an amiable, freedom-seeking people who emerge soundly and hopefully from the incredible cruelties of Mongol emperors and some of our own czars and grand dukes. Love the land and the sea, and devote yourselves to them and you will get along well under the flag of the United States.

“The Russians and Americans have this in common: they are not daunted by distance; both have traveled tremendously under hardships to achieve their farthest boundaries. Our Siberian road to the Pacific is matched by the Americans’ road from Europe to California and Oregon. Our explorers in Hawaii and the South Seas found the Yankee trading-ships and whalers ahead of them. We think of China and Japan as being a natural market for Russia, but the Americans are keen competitors there. They have much to teach us in the ways of manufacture and trade. If Peter the Great were alive today he would be visiting New York and San Francisco rather than the ports of Europe.

“A man has his shadow, and a race has one too—the shadow of history.

“Heed this, you beginning Americans. I have read the documents of the founders of the United States. They are God-given. There is nothing like them in the blackness of Russian political history. It will be centuries before the common man in Russia can fully breathe the air of freedom. Go with American-born

families as much as you can, and learn why they love their way of government. Remember our heroes Demetrius and Yermak, but find their Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln."

The fervent voice of the priest had drawn about him a group of creoles, Kolosh, and Aleuts. They listened gravely, wrinkling their brows in their endeavor to understand the amazing new thoughts of this freedom-loving teacher.

He turned to the young wife.

"Sister Natalya, there must have been strong women in your family. As you mingle with the women of the new country, remember what was gallant in your ancestors, and how they were inspiring companions of men who were flayed and exiled for their beliefs. In your difficult hours, find books that will tell you how Russian women developed from muffled and pampered ladies almost as secluded as those in Turkish harems into pioneers who dared and conquered the perils of Siberia.

"Read about Catherine II, who looked toward the Pacific and encouraged our women to follow the hunters and traders; and then read about such women as Natalya Shelikov, the first white women to come out to the bloody islands of the Aleutians. The heroines you find in American history will blend with the heroines of your race."

There was a call from the castle grounds.

"There, what a sermon I have preached, and the cook is waiting for the salmon. The Lord be thy shepherd, little flock!"

As the priest went from among the reverent group and climbed the hill, Natalya looked after him with moist eyes.

"We must read books, Martin, and be able to teach our children what Father Alexis has said. He leads you to think that there is a God who makes history."

"Yes," said Martin, "he helps you to pick God out from among all the devils in the world. Well, I am glad that the Stroganovs are in his list of good men. I will see if I can borrow a book about them from the castle library. Anika Stroganov, the salt merchant who opened up Siberia—he is the one we will learn about first."

## SALT AND SABLES

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### CHAPTER IV

A BRIDE WAS wanted for the precocious prince, Ivan IV. He was seventeen, and had just been crowned the first Russian Czar. Considering himself the last of the Cæsars, it had pleased him to choose the Cæsar-like title. His ambition was to make Russia a nation, an empire, and he must have a healthy wife to bear him sons for the dynasty he hoped to establish.

Physically, he would be attractive enough to the maiden of his choice. His face was lean and refined, and his body had been made lithe by military exercise. An interesting combination of the scholar and the fighter, the pursuit of culture was his main interest as a youth, but when he became angry his pale eyes glowed dreadfully, and the baleful light in them betokened his later title—"Ivan the Terrible."

Now, however, he was seeking a wife, and was in a gentle mood.

It was the custom to go to a lot of trouble to find the most fitting mate for a grand prince of Moscow. Now that the prince had been crowned, more care than ever was taken.

The proud nobles had been commanded to send the most beautiful and healthy girls in their circles to the Court. These were stepping out of carriages and pouring into the allotted rooms of the palace; they even overflowed into barracks, and into the mansions of the boyars.

Lined up in the white hall of the palace, they waited with docility as the royal physician, in company with Ivan, walked down the fluttering row. It was more than a beauty contest: their qualities as prospective mothers of czars were examined. The physician, seeing Ivan's eyes light up as they approached a certain candidate, would stop before the demure girl and push up her chin, or squeeze or thump her body.

Ivan especially liked one beauty, the daughter of an obscure landowner named Romanov. Her dark hair was luxuriantly silken. Her eyes were big and kind—and adoring. He liked her plump form, and he was glad that the physician, after a second inspection, with renewed pinching, stroking, and punching, approved of her.

Turning his back on the lines of silently reproachful virgins, Ivan IV said that Anastasia Romanov was his choice.

"I think you can count on her to bear you many children," said the physician.

The wedding feast followed with haste. The Court costumers had anticipated Ivan's choice. Their eyes had roved over Anastasia's buxom figure and the low-cut satin robes were ready for the wedding ceremonies. The bride wore huge golden combs in her mass of hair that fell in two fat braids down her back and over her shoulders. Ropes of costly pearls twined her pink-and-white throat.

Attended by two attractive virgins who looked sadly at Ivan but coquettishly at the younger nobles, Anastasia was bathed in milk and fragrant wine, and escorted to the bridal bed.

It was not until late breakfast that the steward discovered a tragic oversight in the wedding ceremonies. There had been a plentiful use of condiments at the feast the evening before, and when the eggs were served at breakfast, there was a grievous delay, due to scraping the bottom of the salt-bin.

"Why is the salt-bin empty?" Ivan asked gently.

"Your Majesty, the shipment was due last week, but it has not arrived. I'm afraid the Cossacks along the Volga plundered the barge. Salt, Sire, is a most rare and precious commodity."

The Czar was just enough to admit this. He knew that the salt used in the palace was imported, and subject to taxes at the border.

"That is one of the reasons why I hate Novgorod," said the officer of the kitchen; "it is located near salt deposits. There is a merchant, Anika Stroganov, who has access to salt, and he boils it in a factory near Novgorod. If, Your Majesty, you conquered Novgorod, those salt deposits would come under the control of Moscow, and this merchant Stroganov's first duty in delivery would be to you."

"I am going to punish the proud and rebellious rulers of Novgorod," said Ivan, "and make them acknowledge Moscow as the Holy City and the heart of the empire, and myself as Autocrat of All Russia. They were not punished enough by my foregoer. When I beat down the walls of that city, I will take over the lands it controls. It was not meant that the sables from the wilderness should come first to Novgorod, or that it should have a monopoly of the precious salt. Those are tributes and revenues that belong to me, as Czar."

Ivan the Terrible had time for internecine warfare because his predecessor had riven the Tartars out of Russia. The young Czar had merely to concern himself with the Tartar tribes that were clinging to the borders of the empire. He meant to find colonizers and soldiers who would deal with them. He was fortunate enough to be the Russian ruler who capitalized on the coming true of a fear that had been in the heart of Genghis Khan.

Of his sons, the Mongol conqueror had said:

"They will clothe themselves in embroidered gold stuffs; they will nourish themselves with meats, and will mount splendid horses. They will press in their arms young and fair women, and they will not think of that to which they owe all these desirable things."

Novgorod was the great colonizing center of Russia, and when Ivan, from sacred Moscow, set out to conquer the elevated and

strongly fortified city, he was advancing to win a greater prize than just the town itself. Before and after the fall of Kiev in 1240, Novgorod's nobility, traders, and peasants had begun penetrating northeast and southeast, by portages and rivers. At the time our story begins it was the center of the fur trade of Europe.

Anika Stroganov, of hated Novgorod, was a far-seeing merchant and he perceived that vengeful Ivan IV would soon be marching his way. With happy discretion, he moved his salt boillery nearer to Moscow, and made application to be appointed Salt Purveyor to the Autocrat of All Russia, and was given the office.

The young Czar favored industrious merchants and traders, for he saw that the paths they made into unexplored countries would become roads for his soldiers. After a time, he rewarded the enterprising peasant Stroganov by granting him pieces of land toward the Urals which seemed to be worth nothing to the Crown. However, as peasants drifted into those far places and settled along the rivers, the salt merchant built barges and filled them with goods to trade for furs, and his commerce and riches grew.

There came a day when a rash Russian prince was captured by a resurgence of Tartars who had been defeated and driven out by Ivan III, and an appeal came from him to be ransomed. There was very little sympathy shown among his fellow-boyars, but the salt-dealer Stroganov came forward with an offer to advance the money. When the nobleman was released, he returned under Tartar escorts who came to Stroganov to collect the ransom.

The traders whom Anika sent up lonely rivers or into the remote northeastern forests had become friendly with the wild tribes, and had procured from them furs so beautiful and rare that the nobility felt it a privilege to have Anika as their fur procurer. For these same aristocrats, he had begun to import pearls and jewelry.

He was a wine-dealer, too. The Church frowned upon the sale of vodka, and Anika was a good churchman. But the sale of wine was not frowned upon. Had not St. Paul himself advised Timothy to take a little wine for the stomach's sake? The devout Anika had become an importer of wines.

The traveler Weber, who visited Novgorod when Anika's son Grigor had become head of the family, gave this account of the activities of the Stroganov:

"On the other side of the river lies a large village which belongs to Grigor Demetri Stroganov, a merchant reckoned the richest in all Russia. The evening we were there, forty-eight large barges all belonging to himself were going to take in wood, and on each of which were 40 people, every one of whom was hired for three Rixdollars."

Let us look eastward into the mysterious land beyond the Urals, which the Stroganov family had marked out as its province.

As early as the eleventh century, daring scouts and traders had come to a mountain chain which seemed to them to be a natural wall marking the end of the world. Some of these explorers named the mountain region Yugra; others called it the Stony Girdle—because in the language of the occupying Tartars, "Ural" means "girdle."

Separating European Russia on the west from Siberia on the east, the Ural chain extends south from the Kara Sea, an arm of the Arctic Ocean, to the middle course of the Ural River, a distance of more than 1300 miles. The breadth of the mountains is from sixteen to sixty-six miles. The scouting parties discovered at last that the supposedly impassable girdle could be crossed, and they then gave the name "Yugra" to the lands beyond.

For many years the merchants of Novgorod had enjoyed the exclusive rights to this trade, but at last restless people dwelling in Moscow began to explore the rivers and forests of the north-east. Where these Muscovites went they settled, built blockhouses and log huts, and cultivated the land.

At last the two streams of Russians met and the men from Moscow, building for permanence, blocked the path of the casual parties from Novgorod.

Ivan III, preceding Ivan the Terrible, had advanced eastward and seized the primitive town of Perm on the Kama River, close to the European side of the Ural, and also the town of Viatka in the same region. Thus he had come within reach of Yugra; but when he sent troops to collect tribute from the Finnish tribes

there, they appeared never to have heard of his power and glory, and refused to pay tribute of sables.

Disappearing into the forest, they left the Czar's inept captains wondering where they had gone, and how to trace them. Well aware of the danger of ambush and massacre, the officers went back to Moscow and told tall tales of overwhelming hordes of Tartars, with native allies, who robbed them of tribute perilously collected.

It was plain to Ivan IV that he must choose some important person to be sub-ruler of this wild country, and it was while he was considering whom to appoint, that the Stroganovs offered to defend the country and collect the tribute of sables in return for a grant of land.

To Anika Stroganov the Czar granted 150 versts (about 100 miles) along the Kama River, which rises in the Ural Mountains, descends past Perm, and flows into the Volga. He authorized Anika to cut forests; establish salt-works; engage workmen; and to colonize. In return he was to build a blockhouse, purchase cannon, and maintain armed forces to oust settled Tartars and repel raids.

In his fur-trading, Anika had sent scouts to lands far beyond the Urals and the River Ob. They came at last to the River Yenisei. When Ivan saw what rarely beautiful furs the trader had procured from this region, he was eager to drive out the Tartar khan and annex it.

Anika advised him not to try to take it by force. He said there was no direct route to it, that it must be approached from the south by way of the land of Perm, which lay east of Moscow. If the Czar would grant him a lease on the country around Perm, he would develop it, and send to Moscow the things the land produced—salt, minerals, wheat, and furs.

The Czar granted the charter—for twenty years. Anika was then seventy, so he had the lease made out in the name of his son Grigor. On reading the lease, Grigor protested against its many restrictions which would hamper the development.

Anika said, "The Czar knows his business—and I know mine."



Cryptically, he was bidding his son not to bother about the restrictions, for how could Ivan enforce them?

East of the Urals ran the Ob, with its tributaries, the Tavda, Tura, Tobol, and Irtysh. The kingdom of Kuchum Khan, the heart of the Tartar remnants, lay in the basin of the Ob. The capital of the kingdom, Sibir, had a name so significant that the entire country to the east of it came eventually to be known as Siberia.

The chief enemy of Ivan in this region was the fiery Kuchum Khan, who had defeated and slain the powerful rivals of his own race. This monarch had become notorious for his refinements of cruelty. Proud of his skill as a horseman and swordsman, he had devised a new test of skill.

Driving rows of stakes into the ground, he bound to them prisoners or slaves. Then, with his guests as competitors, he would mount a swift pony and weave in and out among the stakes. The rider whose sword cut off the most heads was declared the winner.

Could the Tartars be conquered? Could the merchants succeed where the Czar's commanders had failed? Where would the salt producers and colonizers find private troops brave and skilful enough to defeat this khan in Siberia who in a smaller way was exhibiting the fierceness of the Scourge of God himself?

The Cossacks, the Free People and freebooters of the Dnieper River region, supplied the answer.

## CHAPTER V

THE COSSACKS of the Dnieper were a proud people. They had been born and bred in the milder regions toward the Black Sea, and it was only the misfortunes of time and the urge of desperate necessity that forced them into becoming scouts for the Czar, exploring bleak, turbulent rivers flowing into the Arctic.

A people who had lived in the steppes before the onslaught of the Mongols made it a desert of bones, the Cossacks had come out of their hiding-places in the track of the Mongols' retreat, and had

mounted themselves on horses stolen from the camps of the weakened Horde.

Resuming the life of nomads; training their boys rigidly to hunt, swim, and fight, and support themselves from childhood; clothing themselves in sheepskins or the hides of wild beasts; and following leaders whose emblems of royalty were the crudely woven, brilliantly colored garments they wore, the Free People became warriors greatly desired by czars and dukes. Being Christians, they were all that a monarch could desire to defend the borders of his country against the Tartars and Turks.

Locating their camps on hills, they watched the waving seas of yellow grass with eyes sharp to detect the black spots that grew into the forms of horsemen—the scouts of Moslem raiders. Detecting the advance, the Cossack sentinels rode swiftly to the fortified cities close at hand, and aroused the people in time to repel the onslaught.

They had been the “vanguard of the vanguards,” and they were to continue in this role.

The Cossack whose dramatic career we now recite had fallen low from the proud estate of his ancestral tribe. The proud Free People of the steppes would have cast out one so low in spirit as to become a hauler of a trader’s barge up the Volga.

And yet the youth Yermak, lowly born and miserably occupied, remembered his proud people, and became a brigand that he might climb closer to the rank of the freebooter warriors of the Don and Dnieper.

Vassil—son of Timofei—a carter for brigands—was a born leader. He was distinguished among the young men for his flaming spirit and strength of body. Under his coal-black shaggy hair his eyes were eagle-like, and their roving, restless eagerness indicated a daring and adventurous spirit. Many a woman, who despaired of attaching this handsome young Cossack to herself, was satisfied if he chose her for an hour, and overjoyed if day-break found him still beside her.

Lithe, and broad of shoulders, his training as a hunter, fighter, and riverman had fitted him to endure the severest hardships.

Apprenticed early to hard labor, he was as a youth one of a gang of haulers who tugged along the banks of the Volga and Kama, towing barges up the stream. The laden boats were hauled by gangs of men harnessed together like cattle. Sometimes, when the vessel was big and heavily laden, there were as many as forty haulers in the company. When, now and then, the foreman permitted them to rest, they threw themselves on the bare ground. When the brief rest period was over, their leader kicked the sluggards, and they got up like so many docile donkeys and resumed their hauling, relieving the monotony, and blending into a rhythm of labor, by singing.

Assigned sometimes to be the cook, it was this task which gave the youth his nickname. His companions called him Yermak, which meant "the millstone of the handmill."

The work of tracker and cook was too dull for the spirited Vassil, and at the first chance he broke away and wandered down across the flowery steppes to join the Cossack bands along the Dnieper. Trained by them in brigandage—then considered an honest occupation for poor people—the humble fellow became the leader of a band of freebooters. A Cossack Robin Hood chased by the Czar's men, he decided to return to the Volga, to live and rob in a part of its country where soldiers were scarce, and the forest refuge near.

But the cries of those who are plundered carry far, and it was not long before the Court heard that the brigand Yermak and his band were preying on honest merchants along the Volga. To Ivan the Terrible, counting his revenues in Moscow, the outcry of the traders meant that taxes were vanishing with the goods, and he looked on Yermak and his kind as robbers of himself more than of his subjects. The ruffians, he brooded, would even steal a czar's salt! He sent a captain and troops to capture the pirates and hang them.

With the noose dangerously close to his neck, Yermak retreated into the wilderness, gathering on the way bands who were also potential gallows-birds. Toward the untrodden regions of the Urals he went, and his emergency flight indicated the future march of Muscovites and Tartars across the unknown eastern lands which we call Siberia.

Arriving in the region of the upper Volga, the inquisitive brigand soon learned from the peasantry that the Stroganov family had become chiefs of industry in that locality, and had obtained from Ivan a charter to drive the Tartars out of Sibir and to fill their villages with families the Crown would send.

Yermak's summer in the new country had been pleasant. It was almost as fertile and fragrant as the land he and his brigands had left, and the barges on the river were fat indeed. The native hunters and herdsman, if paid a trifle, did not grudge to share their wives or daughters with the newcomers who carried sticks spitting fire and death.

But the Czar's troops were marching again, and much talk about the dreadfulness of the Emperor had given Yermak and his lieutenants a desire to be considered useful and respectable. If they could be employed by the Stroganovs as their scouts across the Urals, they would be at a safe distance from Ivan's vengeance, and would have a chance to redeem themselves.

Suddenly Yermak and his 650 Cossacks swarmed into the frontier town of Veliki Oustioug, where the Stroganov family had its headquarters. It was as if a gang of rustlers led by Billy the Kid had crowded into a peaceful trading-post of our southwest.

His men made a camp on the outskirts of the settlement. They built several fires and hung kettles over them. The cooks brought forth strips of the meat of wild animals, and the smell of meat, tar and liquor along with the strong fragrance of wood smoke was pleasing to the Cossacks who made rings around the fire, and sat there drinking mead, and talking. The familiar minstrel had squatted among them, and was thrumming his strings for any song they desired.

The village had palisades, and there was a sentry stationed at the gate, but there was no conflict at the entrance, for Grigor Stroganov, successor to Anika, was a sagacious man and had hopes that by a courteous reception of the Cossacks he would save his property.

In company with his sub-chiefs, Yermak went through the gate. He saw before him a low, spreading building built of broad oak planks, whose narrow windows resembled the chinks in a for-

treasures for the muzzles of guns. The house had many parts, for rooms had been added as the commerce increased, and around the residence which was its heart were stables and storerooms.

They were met at the entrance by armed torch-bearers who seemed to Yermak's appraising eyes to be very well able to take care of themselves and their masters, though he had no doubt that they could soon be beaten down. However, he had not come to attack, but to make peace.

They were ushered into an anteroom lighted by a huge wood fire—a room decorated with Russian armor and souvenirs of battle, and hung with the skins of bears, wolves, and foxes. Chained to tall perches in the corners were a golden eagle and a falcon, impatient for the excitement of the hunt.

In a spacious inside room, cluttered with chests and bales, and yet richly furnished with sofa, cushions, chairs, and a carved bureau, inset with mother-of-pearl, Grigor Stroganov waited to receive the chiefs. He was a clean-shaven, thick-bodied man of middle height. His face was a mask but his eyes were keen and speculative. His calm dignity awed the noisy, jostling brigands.

Grigor recognized some of his own luxury fabrics in the brilliant garments the chiefs were wearing, and he feared that those locked in his cabinets would go the same way. "If they have come to bargain, instead of rob," he said to himself, "I had better be generous."

Yermak's first words relieved him.

"You are a great employer, Grigor Stroganov. My father lived in this region and hauled goods for your agent, and perhaps you can use the strength of his son, myself, whom they call Yermak. And perhaps also, my brother chiefs, and my many brave Cossacks, may be of help to you in your enterprises. I am returning with a great homesickness to the untroubled scenes of my childhood. It would be good to find a kind employer here. The country beyond, which you are developing, would be healthy for us. We like its remoteness from Moscow."

"You came at a good time," said Grigor. "I have thought of sending down to the Free People. I wish to employ a company of brave warriors in driving the Tartars out of Yugra, the rich land our good Czar has authorized my family to explore and

colonize. We must collect tribute for His Majesty but my scouts tell me that the land is so wealthy in furs and gold that the tribute-collectors themselves can become rich in the collecting. What say you?"

Yermak looked around at the shaggy huddled heads.

"What say you, Takob Mikhailowitel, Nikita Pan, Matvien Meshtcheriak, and you—Ivan Koltso? The Tartars were ever our people's foes. Shall we herd them now, as they herded our forefathers?"

They cried to him vehemently to lead them against the Yugra horde.

"The Czar has no scaffolds in that unknown region." Grigor almost uttered this thought, but caught himself and went on hurriedly, "Your expedition will set out in the spring. The winter is almost upon us and your Cossacks will require food and shelter. These I will provide."

"One more thing," said Yermak. "We trust that you will think it wise to delay informing the Czar that you have employed us until we have gone out and done things of which he will approve."

"I understand," said Grigor. "No messengers will go from here to Moscow until the spring. It is a long and difficult journey in winter. Be assured—I expect no visitors from the Court."

The Cossack chiefs turned to go, but Grigor called Yermak back.

"Eloquent as you are, your men may need some tangible persuasion. Perhaps if I show you the treasures my agents have brought back from Yugra, your talk to your camp will be all the more inspired. They are dedicated as gifts to the Court, and you and I must guard them carefully—or lose our heads."

He took out of a strongbox a collection of nuggets of placer gold, and many specimens of alluringly colored semi-precious stones.

This was probably the first exhibition of those semi-precious Siberian stones which glitter today in jewelers' windows on the Main Streets of all cities.

"I can see by your kindled eyes that you appreciate the value of these pieces from Yugra," said Grigor. "It will astonish you to

know that the native tribes of that region hardly prize at all these natural treasures. To your valiant and superior forces the miserable Voguls and Ostiaks will yield these riches very readily."

The promoter now approached the climax of his inducements. From some dark and guarded depth he dragged forth a curved tusk that was a dozen feet long.

"This tusk," he said to the pop-eyed chiefs, "was passed westward from tribe to tribe in the interior until it was offered for trade in the Ural region; there it came into the hands of my agents. It is said that in the swamps of the north there are the skeletons of many great beasts with tusks like this, and each of them is worth a fortune in the markets of Europe. This ivory, too, is the property of the Czar. We must guard it mutually."

Yermak read the fear in his employer's mind, and laughed, and promised that the Emperor's treasures would be well protected.

"There is one more thing," he said. "My men will want to know more about the Tartars beyond the mountains. Have they taken deep roots there?"

"Their roots there are as deep as they were in Moscow, Novgorod, Kiev. The greater will be your glory if you unseat the eastern horde. I have read a book about them. Sheihan Khan, brother of the hated Batou who conquered our race, led a horde of 15,000 families into the wilds beyond the Urals, and mingled with the Samoyeds beside the frozen sea, who live like brutes. It is the descendants of these Tartars you will go against. The infidels live now in more pleasant places beside the steppes, and have commerce with their brethren in the south. You will not need to account to Moscow or to myself as to what you do with the stuff in their treasure-houses, or the women in their seraglios."

Neither merchant Stroganov nor scout Yermak knew that the advance they schemed was a small part of a network of European discovery that was making their century dramatic and significant. The Portuguese navigators had rediscovered India and China; Spain was spreading her empire in Mexico and South America; English navigators, sailing persistently in search of a northeast passage to China, had come into control of Russia's White Sea. The exploring English merchant, Richard Chancellor, had agitated Ivan the Terrible by his arrival in Moscow by way of the

White Sea, and the Court was agog to impress the Englishman with its power and glory. After having been kept waiting in the outer court twelve days, Chancellor was brilliantly received and found himself feasting beside Ivan among hundreds of boyars dressed from head to ankles in cloth-of-gold.

Reports of the coming of the English had drifted out to the Stroganov settlement, but the salt merchant and fur-trader was not permitted to know that the Czar was thinking that beyond the Urals, beyond the fierce Vogul tribe, and the strong Tartar fortresses, lay a route to Cathay. To Stroganov the Czar's officers merely said, "Go and get furs; make a path for our soldiers; open new places for the people we will send."

On the edge of the dark fir forest the workmen of the Stroganov village joined with the Cossacks in erecting sheds or barracks, built of saplings and covered with horse or cow hides. On the great hearth was a single huge kettle out of which they supped, getting their drink from an open cask of mead.

Around the roaring fire and steaming kettle the half-drunk Cossacks grouped themselves, listening to the persuasive Yermak as he promised each a fortune.

Spring came, and Yermak's forces were increased to eight hundred through the coming of Russians, Germans and Lithuanians who had been ransomed by Grigor Stroganov from the Nogai Tartars in the south. Leaving nothing undone to assure success, the promoter equipped his private soldiers with light cannon, muskets, and arquebuses. Ample food supplies were loaded, so that there would be no need of foraging if the foe had made the country bare of food.

There came a morning when Yermak said, "Pour out the barrels of wine and mead. We are starting."

Sobriety was the rule for Cossacks marching, and the men went forth in sober strength to meet the toil of the rivers and portages, and the danger of the fiercely resisting tribes they would go among.

They were born—these Cossacks—to live along rivers and to travel by them. Their forefathers had thrived upon the Dnieper.



With their narrow Cossack boats—the *chaiki*—they had made their way upstream with oar and sail, and by dragging the boat ashore and rolling it past the cataracts or shallows. They had made their living by carrying fish, wax, salt, and dried cherries, and when they were forced to hide from the seasonal Tartar horde, they knew the caves and the inaccessible precipices beside the river where they could hide and fortify themselves. Yermak and his men, going into Siberia, country of rivers, were of the bold and expert race best fitted to navigate the wild waters flowing to the Arctic—or to the fertile regions of China.

The wary and warlike people of the country of the Urals, the Vogul tribe, were foresters and rivermen also. A Cossack could easily accustom himself to the Voguls' way of sustaining themselves. Game was their chief food, and, like our own American Indians, they followed it along rivers into the forest. In the hunt they used skilfully the primitive bow and arrow.

This tribe had both its winter huts and summer cabins; a half-dozen cabins formed a Vogul village, and usually these villages lay ten or fifteen miles apart. The connecting tracks through the forest were almost invisible. The winter cabin was made of timber, square in shape. The timber was often sunk half-length into the soil; and the house was roofed with sods. Larger ones were built to shelter several families, with a total of perhaps thirty persons, of all ages and both sexes. The frail summer cabins—made of the bark and branches of the birch tree—were abandoned as the seasons and the chase required.

Since the ground was wooded or boggy, these Voguls hunted on foot. The elk sustained them, and labored for them. When they had to pay tribute they paid it, if possible, in the skin of the elk, and the flesh they cut into strips and dried in the open air, like pemmican. But usually the hunter brought back to his family an ample supply of food. His was the country of the wolf, bear, sable, marten and beaver. November, when the fur of the wild beasts was at its best, was the chosen time for hunting. Besides the bow and arrow, the native was expert with traps and pitfalls.

The Ostiaks, a related tribe in this region, were fishers rather than hunters. They liked to be dirty, and their winter cabins

reeked with the smell of fish, smoke, and human bodies. Salt being scarce, the fish they lived on was, like the flesh eaten by the Voguls, either dried or frozen for winter use. The Ostiaks had dog sledges, and their dress was doubled reindeer-skin. When the trapping season came they went on long skates with their dog sleds in search of bears, sables, and squirrels.

North of the Voguls and Ostiaks roved the Samoyeds, who lived mostly in the bleak treeless parts, and existed on fish from the large rivers in those regions.

These wild tribes might scoff at Muscovite soldiers and tax-collectors, but there was another breed of man of which they lived in mortal fear. They had yielded to the fierce and avid Tartars who had thronged in from the southern steppes.

Sagaciously, Yermak enlisted the power of the official Church. A renegade monk, assisted by two unfrocked priests, held services before an altar on which was an ikon of Saint Nicholas, "The Wonder-Worker."

The altar had been made portable, and when the army set forth, Saint Nicholas and his doubtful dignitaries went along. At least the monk and the priests were good enough to celebrate mass in the forests on Sundays and holidays. Perhaps, so serving, they would win back their holiness.

In material weapons, the Cossacks went forth with greater resources. The enterprising Grigor had manufactured a coarse gunpowder that sent forth clouds of furious dense smoke out of the portable cannon.

They built the same kind of longboats their forebears had guided through the rapids of the Dnieper, and shot down in them between the steep shores of the lower Toura River, running the gauntlet of native bowmen and spearmen whose attacks had been instigated by the Tartars.

When came the third year of the expedition, the defense of the country had become so fierce that some of the veterans faltered, and began to urge Yermak to abandon the enterprise.

"It is as dangerous to turn back as it is to go forward," he told them. "Will our longboats go up the steep rapids we have come

through? The foemen are still there to kill us as we struggle up the rivers. Our best chance is to fight through to the country ahead."

Gloomily, the chiefs agreed. They resumed the voyages and portages, and fought their way past ambush after ambush. At last they came to the Tobol River.

At a stretch of the river where it foams through a line of steep and narrow banks, Yermak discovered that the wily Tartars had erected a seemingly impassable obstruction by piling up rocks and logs held together with iron chains. Above this barricade they had hidden themselves, prepared to rain down death from the cliffs.

When Cossack scouts detected the ambushade, Yermak commanded that the longboats be turned toward the shore. Then he took counsel with the chieftains.

Some of them urged Yermak to abandon the flotilla and go by land around the Tartar wall.

"Is that wise counsel?" he asked. "We have built these boats with much toil, and without them we could not have come as far. We will need them for further conquests. No, my comrades, our boats will go safely down the rapids, past this barrier. We will meet cunning with cunning."

It was late in the afternoon, and the darkness could be used to conceal Yermak's stratagem.

"Cut logs the size of sitting men," he commanded.

Then: "Set the logs up in the longboats!"

He then bade certain of his men to strip off their upper garments and clothe with them the dummy figures, crowning each upright log with the Cossack headdress. A long stick, resembling a Cossack pike, was then fastened to each dummy.

Volunteers were called for—one pilot to each boat.

Out the boats went and then in a single line they shot down between the bristling banks.

Deceived by the dusk, the Tartars in ambush loosed their arrows and hurled their spears at the uncertain figures that now dashed and swirled against the pile of rocks and timber. But as they concentrated their futile fire, Yermak led his half-naked

men through the woods at their rear and sides, and, pouncing, slaughtered them with pikes and muskets.

It was as if fate were rewarding the bold and resourceful, for soon after gaining the passage, Yermak met friendly natives who informed him that there was a great hoard of treasure at the little Tartar town of Karatchin, near the River Ob. He was told that the treasure included, besides native gold nuggets, jewels of aristocrats, and church treasures that had been seized long ago by the warriors of Genghis Khan, who in their scattered departure had been attacked by the fierce Vogul tribe. Fortifying their camp, the Tartars had lived on in the region, and had made the plunder a community treasure, guarded through successive reigns.

"Comrades," said Yermak, "it appears to be the wish of Heaven that we turn aside a little from our war on the chief fortresses of the heathen, and recover the holy vessels the ancestors of pigs carried away from our churches and monks' houses. God and Saint Nicholas will bless us for restoring these sacred images, and as for the rest of the treasure—well, we are the Free Company, and we share alike!"

In a fury of religious zeal and profane greed, the Cossacks swept down on the little town, and with their thundering firearms made an easy capture.

The treasure store was indeed there, but they were seized by the lust that sweeps over men suddenly plunged amidst riches, and like the soldiers of Cortez they burdened themselves so heavily that they were vulnerable. With grievous sufferings and loss of life they obtained the plunder.

Hunger had become a new and sharp foe, for the Tartars had scorched the earth and removed all food from the region. Tested in a new way, the Cossack leader again displayed good generalship.

Consulting his renegade priests, he seized on the fact that the Fast of the Assumption was near. The Russian ritual having prescribed a fast of fourteen days, Yermak became in his extremity a John the Baptist, and proclaimed a fast of repentance to last forty days, rallying the mystical faith of his followers to such an intensity that they fanatically endured the hunger.

October had come with its glittering but ominous gold, and before long the rivers would again be frozen and impassable for the longboats. Yermak realized that he must win a crucial battle with the Tartars this month or find himself leading a disastrous retreat back to the little town where he had spent the last winter.

His situation was somewhat similar to that of Cortez in Mexico. His dwindling company was surrounded by thousands of warriors, and if Cossack resolution failed, or the ranks broke, they would—even with their superior weapons—go down under a storm of spears and arrows.

Fortunately, Kuchum Khan had chosen to give battle. He had divided his army into two corps, one reserved to defend the capital, and the other—a mounted battalion—to trample down the Cossacks. These furious riders were commanded by an idolized young kinsman of Kuchum's—Mahmet Kul.

Advancing by land, Yermak suddenly faced this tempest of horsemen, who outnumbered his band thirty to one. He could feel the dismay and despair of his followers, but with rash example and fiery words he rallied them.

"My Cossacks, our cannon and muskets are equal to that host. Remember, musketeers, that if you bring down that young chief, you destroy the heart of the foe. As for the native followers, have you not been told that they hate the Tartars for trying to force the religion of Mohammed upon them? Free the Voguls of the Tartar yoke, and they will fly from our path. Yonder is Sibir—take it or perish before its walls!"

Heading a column, he advanced gallantly. Before the terrifying and deadly fire of the musketeers the Tartars broke and fled.

It was, however, a costly victory. Some of Yermak's bravest fighters had fallen, and the Tartar army before the capital had not yet been met. Again there was talk of taking the back track.

"Would you dishonor our dead," Yermak exhorted, "who gave their lives that we might conquer this province for the Czar? Will you surrender this chance of a lifetime to enrich yourselves? We must fight and win ahead, or be buried under the snows, with the banners of our saints desecrated by pagan victors."

In desperation, the little band fought their way close to Sibir.

The decisive battle would be fought on the morrow. Yermak halted his men in a captured Tartar village.

Kuchum Khan, he told them now, was old and blind, and would flee at the first sign of defeat. It would be necessary—to capture the palace and all the riches and comforts—that the attack be swift and unwavering.

This capital in the forest had long been occupied by Kuchum Khan, and in anticipation of a siege by the soldiers of the Czar, he had fortified it with a high wall of tree-trunks driven into the ground, and had formed the girding river Irtysh into a ditch around it.

The young Tartar commander Mahmet Kul, still confident of defeating the Cossacks, poured forth his army and surrounded Yermak's band.

A curious happening that seemed to the Cossacks a saving act by Saint Nicholas turned the battle into victory for Yermak. In the preceding battle, a band of Voguls had captured a Russian cannon. Ignorant that gunpowder and balls were the tools of death, they dragged the empty and impotent cannon into the field and pointed it at Yermak's troops. Despite the frantic incantations of the Vogul *shaman*, the cannon would not thunder.

Dismayed at the failure of their gods, and in terror as the Cossacks' firearms spread destruction, the Voguls fled into the forests.

Thus heartened, Yermak and his chief lieutenant Ivan Koltzo threw themselves into the thick of the enemy. With death striking at them every instant, they took the young Tartar commander as their target and wounded him, leaving the defenders leaderless. Kuchum Khan then fled in fright and confusion southward to a refuge across the steppes.

The victorious Yermak led his veterans across the steep banks of the Irtysh. They entered joyously the town of Sibir, whose inhabitants prostrated themselves in the line of his march to the palace.

There were chests of silk which caravans had brought up from the luxurious bazaars of the south; there was a wealth of rarely beautiful furs and golden trinkets; and there were Tartar women left in the harems by their fleeing lords.

## CHAPTER VI

CONQUEROR YERMAK, VICTORIOUS over earth and men, had become a fearsome lord to the peoples around. Native chiefs came to acknowledge his might and valor, but he judged their loyalty and sincerity by the furs they brought him.

The sables and ermine that poured into the palace were nothing to gloat over in the way of personal fortune: they were gifts for the Emperor that would save their necks from the gallows. During all their battle with the wilderness, the Cossack leaders remembered that they were making a road by which the Czar's captains might come to hang them.

Yermak talked it over with Ivan Koltzo, who had started out with him as co-chief but was now his submissive lieutenant. "You, Ivan," said Yermak, "will take to yourself a new and honorable role. You will be our ambassador to the court of our terrible Little Father."

Ivan Koltzo looked incredulously at his commander.

"Is this the reward of comradeship, that I should become the scapegoat, and be vultures' meat in Moscow?"

"Trust me, comrade. Have faith in my judgment. A rogue is only a rogue when he is taking from others. It is not the thundering for which punishment is exacted; it is the loss of the treasure. Therefore, it is foreordained that he will be forgiven when he is a bearer of gifts. This thing I will do: I will write penitently to the Czar. I will confess our guilt and ask forgiveness."

"Do you think that will be enough?" Koltzo asked.

"No, but you will take something in the way of substantial persuasion. Along with you will go sixty sacks of precious furs, and I will inform His Majesty that these are just the first tribute of a province we have added to his dominions. When he accepts Siber as a province, he will accept us as its defenders.

"If any of his ministers question you, tell them how we have been tempted by the Tartars to come over to their side, since they know that we belong to the Free People whose right it is to sell their swords where their judgment chooses.

"Go without fear, Ivan Koltzo. Do you think the Emperor will send producers of wealth to the scaffold? I have studied the ways

of monarchs, and I have observed that while they grasp for kingdoms, they pinch roubles, and reward men who produce tributes."

Grigor Stroganov, worried in his counting-house, gave Ivan Koltzo a chilly greeting. He remembered that the Czar had blamed him for employing the Cossacks, and that though they had become independent of him, he still stood in the mind of the Court as their sponsor. But when he saw the train of furs that was going past his warehouses to the treasury of the Emperor, he agreed that the gifts would win a pardon from the Czar, and he wrote a petition for Koltzo to take with him asking His Majesty to look with favor on the Cossacks, who had taken a great province from the Tartars, and were presenting it to the Crown.

Months later, the little band of indefatigable Cossacks, their trophies still intact after the battles with tribes and rivers, approached the holy city of Moscow. They made the sign of the cross as they beheld its gilt domes and golden crosses, the star-bespangled cupolas, and the belfries with their lofty spires.

"What a privilege it is," Koltzo told his followers, "for men so lately condemned to be hanged, to enter this Holy Gate which welcomes us with its ikon of the Virgin and the Child."

They had obtained a citizen-guide at the gate, and this man, seeing how reverent the outlandish travelers were, went out of the way to show them the twisted, variously painted church that had so entranced Vassili the Blessed that he had ordered that the eyes of the gifted architect be plucked out, so that the builder could not be lured by some other monarch or city to erect another like it.

Along irregular, narrow, poorly paved streets that at certain spots gave vistas of elevated gardens, our Cossacks proceeded wonderingly, kneeling often as priests rode by in magnificent robes, or as processions led by priests and deacons went by carrying miraculous portraits, accompanied by choristers singing the Mass.

"Who are the men standing in the doorways?" Koltzo asked the guide.

"Why, they are the outdoor servants. They stand at each door to guard the house from thieves."



"How wicked that there should be thieves in this Holy City," Koltzo said solemnly, while his men smirked behind the back of the guide.

At last they came to the massive walls of the Kremlin, bristling with curious towers with small but ominous loopholes and windows. It indeed seemed spacious enough to contain all the citizens in case of an attack.

Koltzo's eye fell on a building.

"Who lives there?"

"That is the Tirima. The royal ladies are kept there, secluded and veiled. They are not allowed even to go to church."

"So—I did not know that our customs were so closely related to the Sultan's. Comrades, when we return to the wilds, we must seclude and veil our women."

His followers were watching the fortresses, and were so awed that they did not smile at their leader's forced attempt to appear at ease.

The palace guard had come to question them. Koltzo decided that it was well that he had received papers from employer Stroganov.

What were the contents of these sixty bulky sacks?

Furs—a wealth of ermine and sables surpassing in number and quality any that had come before from the mysterious land of Yugra.

And what was the name of this new city and territory that was so familiar to the Cossacks?

Sibir—a word that slid off the tongue but which awakened no memory among the court's historians.

The geography of Russia had been enlarged. These bold Cossacks brought substantial proof that the Czar's empire had expanded.

Ivan himself came to greet the abashed Koltzo and to gloat over the furs. He heard patiently the Cossack's trembling oratory, read Grigor Stroganov's petition; and then inspected the gift of furs. The sables and ermine were the most persuasive. He lifted the Cossack from his knees.

"Do not fear," he said; "I have dismissed the hangman. In-

stead of hemp collars, Yermak and his chiefs will wear silver ones."

He gave orders that the Cossacks be given comfortable quarters, and he himself came through the crowds to sit down and eat with them, and hear from their lips of their battles with the Tartars, Voguls and Ostiaks, from whom this great tribute of furs had been wrenched, and of the gallant conquest of the city of Kuchum Khan.

Ivan Koltzo enjoyed himself so hugely among the fleshpots and harlot-houses of Moscow that he lost track of time and forgot his obligations to his chief, and had at last to be told by the officers of the Kremlin that he had stayed to the full of his welcome.

Departing, he bore with him rich gifts from the Czar to Yermak: a long fur mantle which, however beautiful, seemed to the Cossack a strange gift to be sending to a chief who had just sent to the monarch many bales of similar furs. There was another gift, however, for which Koltzo had nothing but admiration. He wished that he was the one for whom it was intended. The sunlight sparkled upon it as he held it up. It was a rich and heavy coat of mail. Emblazoned on its shining surface was a big golden eagle.

The pardoned Cossack turned east again, regretting that Yermak, the partner of his battles, had not been there to share his pleasure with vodka and women. Away he went from the awful presence of the Emperor; from the admirable bastions and cannon, from the sacred atmosphere of the Metropolitan of Moscow driving around in his coach-and-six; away from the variously colored churches, with their green onion-shaped cupolas, in which he had expiated his sins of the past and present; away from the kindly adoring peasants who thronged him in the market-place to hear him tell of the Tartars he had slain by hundreds in the mysterious land of Yugra.

For all the fact of his forgiveness, Ivan Koltzo breathed freer as he put the Kremlin behind him. He had been shown a report the Czar had received from a captain sent out to capture certain men who had made trouble on the rivers. It had said:

"The principal mutineers have been hanged. Of their com-

panions, one in every ten has been hanged. All of those I have hanged were placed upon gibbets, which I erected on rafts and set afloat, so that along the whole course of the river they might serve as an example."

When Ivan Koltzo delivered to Yermak the cloak of fur which was glorious because the Czar had worn it, the Cossack commander was proud, but when as a climax of the gifts the sub-chief brought forth the shining coat of mail, Yermak embraced the bringer, and shouted and danced in joy.

"Now, that is indeed the height of imperial favor," he cried. "This magnificent cuirass will henceforth be part of my body. Night and day I will wear it!"

It was, as time was soon to show, a tragic decision.

The winter following the return of Koltzo was a disastrous one for the Cossacks. The supply of food gave out, for Yermak, though he might have known that regiments of occupation would follow, had not expected that the Czar would do him the honor of sending Prince Volkowski, at the head of 500 soldiers. With famine came pestilence, to which the Prince succumbed.

Spies of the Tartars informed the khans of the weakened state of the Russians, and they gathered in numbers and made frequent assaults on the stronghold.

Karatcho, a minor Tartar chief, had sent word to the camp that he was prepared to submit to the rule of Moscow, and Yermak sent Koltzo to the proposed meeting-place to make the peace. The khan had tricked them, and Koltzo marched into an ambush, and was slain.

The American plainsmen who at a later period used their covered wagons as a defense against circling Indians had an early—though unknown—example in these Tartars and natives who girt Sibir with trains of wagons to block the sorties of the Cossacks, and to shield themselves from gunfire.

With Koltzo lost to him, Yermak felt lonely and depressed. There was left only one veteran chief—Matvien Meshtcheriak.

"Go out, Matvien," Yermak commanded, "and destroy this ring of wagons!"

The battle lasted well on into the next day, and then Karatcho

extricated what wagons he could, and fled to the camp of Kuchum Khan in the country of Ishim.

When spring came, with fresh food supplies, Sibir's garrison revived, and Yermak went here and there subduing rebel chiefs, and assigning patrols to watch the trade routes.

Ill-intentioned fate sent welcome news to Yermak. He was told by a messenger that a caravan of Bokhariat merchants had come from Central Asia to trade with the far outposts of the Czar. They feared to advance because the warriors of Kuchum Khan were camped on the branch of the Irtysh which they were following.

"We will rid that rich trade route of the plundering old fox," Yermak said, and, glittering in his cuirass, led fifty picked Cossacks to escort the caravan.

Failing to discover the caravan, Yermak chose to bivouac for the night at a spot protected by the waters of the Irtysh on one side and by a shallow ditch on the other. It was stormy, and the rains and shadows curtained them, and he posted no sentry.

Before the darkness set in, however, they had been detected by scouts of Kuchum Khan. The old chief was himself in the field, and when his men told him that Yermak was going to sleep within his grasp, he could scarcely believe that the crafty antagonist could indulge in such folly. Fearful of a snare, he bade the scouts go back and bring proof that the Cossacks were asleep.

The wind was whistling about Yermak's camp, and the river was loud, and the spies were not heard. They came back triumphantly with three Russian muskets, reporting that Allah had blessed them even more in this last hour, because he had permitted them to set adrift the boats of the Cossacks.

Wilder than the storm was the attack of the Tartars riding to victory and revenge. Spanning the water barriers, rushing into the camp, lunging and stabbing, they slaughtered the Cossacks, whose only alarm was the death-cry of their comrades.

Protected by his coat of mail, Yermak intercepted and turned the death-blows aimed at him, sprang through the Tartars thrusting at him, and leaped out of the tent. One Cossack escaped with

him, and the two ran to the place where the boats had been moored but found them gone.

The foe was at Yermak's heels, and his only chance to escape was to swim down the wild river. Into it he plunged, and where he went the pursuers could not see.

Waiting hungrily for the news of Yermak's capture or death, Kuchum Khan became frenzied when his men reported that the most-desired prize had escaped into the river.

"Allah," he cried, "did not give me this gift to snatch it away! Go range the banks of the river! Rouse the tribes along the stream!"

The search continued for days, while Kuchum Khan raged. Then came the reward he had prayed and whined for. A Tartar, pausing beside a pool at the edge of the river, saw the sun glinting on metal under the surface. He gazed into the stream, and detected a floating form whose breast shone. He reached down greedily to bring out the precious plunder of death. The dead warrior was clad in a rich coat of mail, surmounted by a golden eagle.

"Yermak, the Cossack! We have found him! He was drowned! Allah is mighty, Allah is good!"

The shriek sounded from one Tartar scout to another until it rang through the tent of Kuchum Khan.

How weak, the Tartars exulted, were the gods of the Cossacks before the will of Allah! Yermak had worn his talisman. He had lain down confident in his charmed cuirass, but his saints had slept with him.

Kuchum Khan, content to take as the crown of his career his slaying of Yermak, permitted his chiefs to cast lots for the mighty ataman's sword and coat of mail. For decades they were to be exhibited in Tartar camps as trophies of the prowess of the Tartar princes of Sibir.

But before the trophies were taken away there were ceremonies to celebrate the victory, in which Yermak's body, clad in the cuirass, was centered. It may be legend, but it is worth reciting.

"The Tartars hung the corpse with the great golden eagle emblazoned on the armor, upon a framework of poles, and for six weeks made it a target for their archers. Yet even the carrion

birds of prey, wheeling in the dark clouds about the hero's head, respected the august remains—a terrifying and prodigious proof to the Mussulman that the dead leader was of no common clay. At night a cloud of baleful fire flickered about his head.”

Impressed by these omens, the Tartars at last buried Yermak with the respect due one of their own heroes.

When the news came to Sibir that Yermak was no more, the Cossacks drained flagons to drown their sorrow, and the bards among them began to recite the exploits through which a lowly Cossack had become the Emperor's mightiest warrior and conqueror. These chants spread to other Cossack camps, and legends and poems about Yermak multiplied. One of the informal ballads about him is as follows:

“I am the robber hetman of the Don.  
’Twas I went over the blue sea, the Caspian;  
And it was I who destroyed the ships;  
And now our hope, our Orthodox Czar,  
I bring you my traitorous head,  
And with it I bring the empire of Siberia.”  
And the Orthodox Czar will speak,  
He will speak, the terrible Ivan Vasilevich.  
“Ha! thou art Yermak, son of Timofei,  
Thou art the hetman of the warriors of the Don.  
I pardon thee and thy band.  
I pardon thee for thy trusty service,  
And I give thee the glorious gentle Don  
As an inheritance.”

Yermak lived on in memory as the Cossack who showed Ivan the Terrible the opening of the way to the Pacific.

The death of Yermak weakened the Russian hold on Sibir. Kuchum Khan, gaining vigor from his enemy's passing, came again and drove out the demoralized Cossacks.

Yermak's successor, Chalkov, chose ways of discretion and selected another site for the fortress, at the junction of the Ob and Irtysh. This place, Tobolsk, was twelve miles away.

But the always-fiery Kuchum Khan could not tolerate the nearness of the Russians, and kept dashing his forces against Chalkov's

reinforced regiments. The Russian commander, however, triumphed at last, for by a surprise attack he recaptured Sibir, seized Kuchum Khan, and destroyed the Tartar power. Old blind Kuchum, his spirit at last broken, wrote the Czar submissively, but then fled from the shame of it to the khans of the south. He was murdered by a Tartar chief in a camp of refuge.

Two years after the death of Yermak, the government was sending horses, cows, and plows to the peasants it had sent out to live in Tobolsk. Repelling periodical Tartar attacks, the new town grew in commerce and population. As St. Louis or St. Joseph, U.S.A. became the starting-point for Americans venturing out along the trail to Oregon, Tobolsk became the place of beginning for expeditions setting out by portage and river to cross Siberia.

The Crown saw that the region Yermak had conquered would be useful as a fortress for defending its backdoor in Europe from infidel invaders, and that it would be also a starting-place into Asian forests rich in furs, and the markets of Cathay.

The Church came early to this region. The first church was built at Tiumen in 1586. In 1601, six years before the Cavaliers came to Jamestown, Virginia, the first monastery was built at Tobolsk. In 1620, the year the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, the first diocese of Siberia was founded at Tobolsk.

Of the early fur trade about Tobolsk the secretary of the Isbrand embassy to China gives us, in quaint spelling, this view:

"Their traffick consists most of furs, such as sables, ermines, fox skins, and such like . . . the sables are caught by the inhabitants in traps, not unlike our rat and mice traps . . . the Czar of Muscovy has the twentieth of all the sables that are caught throughout the year."

A little later in his record about the same locality, he gives this note on a new kind of sable-hunting:

"They catch here the sables in a quite different manner from what we have related before; for they shoot them with arrows, or they make a fire under the trees where they know the sables shelter themselves; which, being suffocated by the smoak, fall from the trees, and are soon caught."

## FUR-HUNTERS FLING A WIDE NET

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### CHAPTER VII

*To Enterprising Young Men.*—The subscriber wishes to engage ONE HUNDRED MEN to ascend the River Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two, or three years. For particulars enquire of Major Andrew Henry, near the Lead Mines, in the County of Washington (who will ascend with and command the party) or to the subscriber at St. Louis.

Wm. H. Ashley.

THE PENETRATION OF the Cossack vanguard into Siberia was similar to the 1822 American enterprise, indicated above, of Captain Ashley of the Missouri Militia, one of our first western fur-traders. The service rendered by the Upper Missouri was like that rendered by the four tremendous rivers that lay between the Urals and the Pacific: the Ob, the Yenisei, the Lena, and the Amur.

Along the southern edges of western Siberia, which were open to Tartar attacks, a cordon of *ostrogs*, or forts, with watch-towers between, gradually pushed out toward the mountain chain that became a wall separating Siberia from China. The occupation of



the descendants of Yermak who became soldiers was to man the watch-towers and forts and watch for hordes of infidels riding with the seasons up across the steppes. On the north of Siberia lay a vast region of forest and morass beyond which lay the Polar tundra zone.

Between these boundaries lay a belt of country suitable for agriculture running west to east, roughly 3500 miles long and 350 broad. From Tobolsk, the line of march to the Pacific was to run through this belt, on a fairly straight route that was equally distant from the tundra country of the north and the mountains of the south. The Church and commerce, in the steps of the sable-hunters, followed this fertile line.

Our western explorers, blessed by the reaches of the Missouri, were less fortunate as they approached the mountains and sea-coast, but for the hunters and traders of Siberia, assisting rivers abounded, and their basins were plentiful with the furs the Cossacks sought.

The four great rivers, branching eastward and westward, stretched out big fingers to aid the explorers to span the thousands of miles between them and the Pacific. Tomsk, on the River Ob; Yenisei on the Yenisei; Irkutsk and Yakutsk on the Lena, and Okhotsk on the Pacific—so ran the route. No sooner was one town founded than the next river east was explored and the site of a new town chosen.

Having explored the Ob far north to the Arctic Ocean where the early Russian vessels had met English navigators, the Cossack adventurers were near enough to the closest tributaries of the Yenisei—Siberia's second great river in the eastward march—to drag their boats and barges across the flat, intervening plains. The burden of the portage did not rest on the Cossacks: they pressed into service as porters and haulers tribesmen they subdued. When passing through forest areas, they used the *martas*, or sledges, of the natives, drawn by men or horses; and in the treeless tundras, sledges drawn by reindeer or dogs. In some sudden emergency it was native help that cut timber and built decked raft-boats to follow some river.

The natives conquered in the advance usually had river experience, and became guides and sailors. Mingling Cossack and na-

tive experience, the necessary equipment for navigation was improvised. The anchors were made of wood weighted with stones. The ropes were of twisted strips, and the sails were the tanned hides of reindeer.

The colonies founded on the Yenisei began in the same year the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. Little did the Cossacks care that two centuries before the birth of Christ a tribe of nomads out of the mountains of the south came northward and found the Yenisei, and followed it north against Arctic winds which cut their faces and forced them to dress in furs. Finding skeletons in the northern marshes, the hunters did not pause to wonder about a man more primitive whom Science would name "The Yenisei Man."

The traveler Colquhoun, who traced the path of the Cossack hunters, thus accounts for their almost incredible endurance:

"Half-savage themselves, they would be able to subsist with the Ostiak, on fox flesh eaten raw, intestines first; dig with the Buriat for roots stored in the prairie dog's burrow; or, again with the Samoyed, feast on the half-digested green stuff taken from the reindeer's stomach.

"They would array themselves, with the Vogul, in thick furs and hoods adorned with the ears of animals, or, with the Yakutes, in coats of fishskin. They would share, with the Tunguse, the shelter of caves in hollow tree-trunks. And thus from day to day, levying food and clothing from the very wilderness, these intrepid pioneers made their way over snow-covered wastes and through hundreds of miles of silent forest, down broad pine-fringed rivers and across bare, schist-strewn mountains, supporting the extremes of hunger, thirst, and cold.

"When finally, having fought their way through *taiga* and *tundra* and faced the dangers of bear and elk hunts, with the alternative of starvation, they emerged upon a human habitat, it was but to engage in a still deadlier struggle with superior forces of hostile nomads. Silent Samoyed and dull Buriat, gentle Tunguse and brutal Ostiak, alike fought hard against the invader. But it was the Koriats, inhabiting the coast of Kamchatka and the adjoining coast, who proved to be the most formidable, be-

cause fanatical, foe. When so hard-pressed by a better-armed enemy that victory was impossible, it was the Koriats mode to kill off women and children. Then the whaleskin-cuirassed warriors, having taken oath to 'close the sun' and 'make a bargain with Death,' rushed into the thick of their enemies, and fell, each man fighting to the last."

Descended as we have seen from brigands of the Volga, these later Cossack bands looted mankind as well as forests, a traveler recorded.

"Thirty of these Cossacks took the opportunity at night, when everyone was enjoying the benefit of rest. They surprised the town, murdered and plundered all that came their way, and were within an inch of seizing the Governor, who happily escaping their hands, caused the alarm to be given to the inhabitants, who soon obliged these vagabonds to take flight. The darkness of the night covering their retreat, they escaped with the greatest part of the booty."

Employed as tax-collectors by a rather helpless government, the Cossack devised a method of collecting tribute both ferocious and efficient. To insure that an entire community would submit peacefully, the women and girls of the village were at once seized as hostages, and the custom thus early founded became a habit of infamy later in the Aleutians.

"Yassak" was the hated name for taxes. Yassak: two roubles from each male, and the value reckoned in furs. Each grudging man must bring a sable-skin, or one of similar value. When there was a goodly pile before the collector, he selected as many of the finest furs as would pay the tax for the entire village, and, to be on the safe side, appraised each fur at half its market value. The remaining furs were then sold—some Cossack trader making a good bargain—and the proceeds were divided equally among the males.

It was, for the Crown, an excellent system. The best furs, under pain of death, went to the government, and were reserved for the royal family.

The collection completed, the loathed Cossacks rode away, and the men who had given wives and daughters as hostages sought

them out, hoping against hope that they would find them as they were.

It was usually where two navigable rivers met that the first of the Cossack traders opened their posts. Here arose the conventional Russian octagonal log huts, with sheds around to shelter their supplies. These houses were furnished with hand-carved tables and benches of cedar, and with ikons, and the ever-comforting samovar. The roof was covered with the skins of animals, and above the tip of the house rose a crude cross, indicating that the house was a holy Russian one, as distinguished from the pagan huts of the natives. The cold floors were covered with wolfskins and bearskins which the owners' own hunting skill had provided.

Villages grew from these single houses lifting their smoke among the wintry branches of the forest, because the native nomads, retreating from the worst blasts of winter, followed the Cossack trader to his home and lifted near it their conical tepees of skin and birchbark.

Peace was assured, because the trader had firearms to guard his store of flour, tobacco, and tea—upon which the nomads depended for their winter comforts—and they in turn had kept their choicest catches to barter with him.

When the settlement grew into a town and into an established center of government, the military governor and his staff came to town arrayed in grand uniforms and with a daunting show of muskets. The commander at once sent word to the Russian merchants, settlers, tribute-collectors, and native chiefs, demanding their presence.

Then he delivered a tirade against the official he had succeeded, commiserating the citizens and natives because they had been cheated and abused.

Promising a fair administration, he dismissed them, and they went away outwardly happy but inwardly doleful, feeling that they would be cheated and abused just as shamefully by the new *voivode*. Often natives coming a long distance to the post to pay tribute to the *voivode* were robbed by agents he himself had sent

out to intercept them. These brigands took the richest furs and left only poor ones to go to the Czar as tribute.

The Czar himself mistrusted every military governor. The frauds became so notorious that the Crown sent soldiers to surprise and search the trains of the returning officials. The searchers were officially warned to look for furs in the lining of men's clothes, and inside the petticoats of the women of the party.

In the track of the Cossack pathfinders and freebooters came the *promyshleniki*, a class of fur-hunters at first mild and industrious but who in the Aleutians became infamous for their lust and cruelty.

The fur trade, motivating the Crown, had become also the main incentive for all Siberian wanderers. Why should a man be content to till the fields when the value of pelts was high and annually increasing? He who took the trail must brave dangers and suffer hardships, but how great was the reward! Two fine fox pelts had immense value in barter in the fur markets. The price these two rare pelts would bring would be equal to the combined worth of twenty heads of cattle, five horses, scores of sheep and chickens, and a hut with fifty-five acres of land.

Having gathered at the headwaters of a large river, the company of hunters chose a *Peredovchik*, or foreman, agreeing that he was to have power to punish them for failure to perform their duties or for committing offenses against their code. They roundly swore to obey and enforce his orders.

The first duty was to build boats. Four of them were assigned to the building of one boat. It was a covered vessel, so that they could sleep in it, and so that the roof would shield them from the arrows of hostile natives along the tributaries of the river.

While waiting for the first snowfall, the *Peredovchik* sent them forth to kill elks, deer, and bear for winter food. Others were put to work making traps and setting them out for wolves, foxes, and lynx. The snow imminent, groups were formed and sleds, snowshoes, and leather bags were provided and stowed on the boats.

"*Bozhe pomoshich.*" With this prayer for God's help, they set their leather sail and voyaged to the grounds of the sable. A monk went along, and said prayers daily. He was made to hunt

for sables, or to do the work of the camp, along with the rest. When they camped, the site was given a holy name. The first sable-skins obtained were dedicated to a patron saint, or to a beloved church, and were called "God's sables."

They had childish minds, these fur-hunters. In their anxiety that the sables be not frightened away from their haunts, care was taken not to mention the names of certain creatures that might scare the little beasts.

Around the campfire, some old hunter warned the fresh ones:

"Do not speak the word 'raven' on the hunting-grounds. If you see that loud bird with the plumes of night, speak of it as 'The High One.'

"Do not mention the wildcat, foe of man and beast. Say instead, 'The Jumper.'"

When the hunting season ended, the parties came together again. Leaders whose groups had distinguished themselves by the value of their catch were praised and rewarded. Hunters accused of offenses were tried by the foreman, whose sentences were light except in the case of thieves. These sneaks were heavily flogged, but for minor offenses the guilty man had only to stand on a tree-stump and go hungry while his comrades feasted.

Such were the first *promyshleniki*—probably just as good a lot as those led by our fur-hunter Jedediah Smith with a Bible and Methodist hymnal in his knapsack.

It had taken about a decade to become familiar with the Yenisei, and while exploring its waters the Cossack voyagers learned about the third great river flowing northward—the Lena. Eastward branches of the Yenisei took them close to the westward tributaries of the Lena, and then the intervening land was soon spanned.

Vassili Bugor, with ten men, started out from the Yenisei, and found the Lena River. Through the might of firearms, he conquered the tribes within a stretch of four hundred miles.

Soon after he had returned and spread the news of richer fur regions waiting to be won, the Cossack Beketov extended his gains on the Lena, and founded a fort among the curious Yakutes, which developed into the city of Yakutsk, capital of eastern

Siberia, and the starting-point for the drive to the Pacific coast.

From Yakutes the Russians learned a new way of subsisting on the land. In the spring they harvested the inner bark, or bast, of young pine trees, and this became one of their foods. It was beaten to a fine powder, boiled in milk, and eaten together with powdered dried fish.

What a curious priesthood and people—to worship and adore a tree; and to hang on the burgeoning branches all kinds of knick-knacks—of iron, brass, and copper! And how queer were these pagan *bihuns*, or priests, who decorated their robes similarly—with bits of iron, rattles, and balls! And what a strange rite to kill cattle and horses, and ornament the worshiped tree with their heads, while at the same time the worshipers gorged themselves on the flesh of the sacrificed animals!

In gorging, the Cossacks had met their match. Where there was a fire and a pot, there were the Yakutes, devouring, devouring. A Cossack, even after starving on a long trail, could not compete with a stomach that could take at one time: a gallon of tea; a gallon of boiled fish and soup; then a gallon of boiled meat; and after that a gallon-pail of mush, and a final course of dried fish, with the skin broiled over the fire.

In the course of time, however, the Yakutes were to become a superior tribe among the native races of Siberia. Their abodes were fixed, and they furnished their houses with native art, though they permitted their horses and cows to live with them. There were craftsmen among them who designed trinkets and metal-work of all kinds, and who carved ivory in the manner of the Chinese. Born traders, the Yakutes were to earn the name "The Yankees of Siberia." Their trains of reindeer, laden with tea, tobacco and flour, journeyed to tribes 2000 versts—1300 miles—away. Long before the coming of the Cossacks, they had found their way to the Pacific.

It was during these battles on the Lena that two Cossack traders, Thedka Nedostriel and Vaski Karetin, had an encounter with savage natives similar to those of our own pioneer traders and hunters on the overland trail.

As winter came on, these traders decided to quit the upper

waters of the Lena and float down on their raft to an abandoned hut.

Reaching the place, they landed their goods and provisions and went in to prepare the hut for occupancy. Suddenly six Yakutes armed with spears and arrows came out of the woods and entered.

Thedka coolly offered them fish and bread, but when they tasted the bread of the white man they threw it away in disgust. Foreseeing trouble, he went out to secure the supplies that had been loosely put down, but the natives were thieves and this movement provoked an attack. Vaski and he were seized, bound, and tortured.

Leaving them bruised and wounded, the Yakutes went out to plunder. Their going, however, gave Thedka time to free his hands with his teeth and to seize a hidden knife. When they returned, he lunged at them with such desperate courage that they withdrew.

Setting fire to the hut, they showered arrows through the windows and door. Badly wounded, Vaski fell helpless on the ground. Meanwhile Thedka had run to the river bank, unmoored the raft, and escaped, but as the rapid current caught it the Yakutes ran alongside and showered their arrows at the fugitive, who fainted from loss of blood. The raft went swirling past a hut some miles farther down, but Cossack trappers saw it and rescued Thedka.

Unconscious when rescued, he was still insensible when warning came to the party that the natives were coming. Presuming that Thedka was dying, the Cossacks abandoned him. Fortunately, however, the savages did not come, and the Cossack recovered and fled to safety. His endurance was an early sign of the hardiness and recuperative power of the Russian people. All through Slavic history, we read of persons of all classes who survived terrible torture and hardship. Cradled in pleasant climates, and driven north to sub-Arctic soil, the Slavs defied the worst that nature or man could do to break them down. Their continual yearning for milder territory is understandable.

These crude conquerors were no mapmakers, and they considered that Atlasov, finder of Kamchatka, had discovered a new land. His adventure in the extreme northern region of Siberia



occurred more than fifty years after the dauntless Cossack, Simon Dezneff, discovered the Kolyma River. In June, 1648, Dezneff started from its mouth in the Arctic and rounded the northeastern coast of Asia, passing through the straits navigated by Bering eighty years later, visiting islands opposite East Cape, and reaching the mouth of the Anadyr on the Pacific about October. Following him, Cossack explorers reached the Sea of Okhotsk, and journeyed from the Anadyr to Kamchatka, but the march was slow and uninspired as compared with the trek from the Urals to the Lena.

With the Lena region gained, the march to the Pacific was assured. From the river eastward, Siberia extends somewhat less than two thousand miles. The Yana River . . . the Indighirka . . . the Kolyma . . . then the Chukchi Mountains guarding the eastern coast of Siberia . . . and then the Anadyr River, flowing into the Pacific Ocean—one of the few rivers that broke through the forbidding hills.

Lured by false reports of silver mines, Cossack Busa, in 1638, ten years after Bugor discovered the Lena, voyaged from the mouth of the Lena to the Yana, while Cossack Ivanov, traveling on horseback from the sources of the Yakutsk, came also to it. Hearing of the Indighirka River from natives along the Yana, Ivanov led his mounted party to it the next year.

In 1639, Andrei Kopilov, from the Lena, led his mounted band across the difficult mountains to the ocean coast of mist and fog, and went out along a surf-beaten neck of land to found the trading-post Okhotsk on the sea of that name. The place became a shipbuilding center, and the starting-point for the Muscovite searches for the fog-hidden new land the Tunguse told about.

In 1647, Ivan Athanasiev, with fifty-four Cossacks, founded another *ostrog* on the Okhotsk Sea, despite the resistance of a thousand fiercely desperate Tunguse. This originally Mongol tribe occupied an immense territory, roaming north and south. So far was the roving that the burden-bearing animal they used changed from the horse to the reindeer or the Eskimo dog, and the tribe was spoken of as being divided into Horse, Reindeer, and Dog Tungusians.

The fur-hunters had indeed flung a wide and quick net. Yermak had crossed the Urals in 1581, and the Cossacks had reached the Sea of Okhotsk in 1636, whereas it took the "Americans" two centuries to reach the Pacific. Balboa at Panama and Drake at New Albion had their unsung contemporary in a shaggy, brutish Cossack gloating over a sea-otter skin in the chill fogs of the north.

After the penetrations of the Cossack adventurers, came the enterprising, free-moving merchants and farmers, and then came colonies of peasants transferred from their beloved villages in a more comfortable country to the sites the Czar had selected for settlements. Later, the migrations were more politely induced and guided by government agents. There was no parallel among the Siberians to the enthusiastic surge of the American homesteaders.

The Russian peasants and the Cossack soldiers did not get along well together. All that bound them together was the influence of the Church and a dumb, submissive patriotism that made them proud of czaristic tyranny setting out to make the world its empire.

The Crown had favored the pioneer Cossacks by giving them choice lands, and the Cossack soldiers wore yellow bands around their hats to show that they were subject to special military call, and were preferred individuals. Despite these distinctions, the descendants of the Free Brethren had become hirelings, loungers, and guzzlers.

"They are worse than the Tartars," the peasants grumbled.

In turn, the Cossacks showed huge contempt for the Russian settler, because he groveled in earth, or went forth as a petty peddler, and was a slave to his women.

There were, however, Cossack communities in the region of the Urals who set their brethren an example of intelligent industry. Finding inexhaustible schools of sturgeon and herring in the rivers they explored, they settled along the banks and obtained franchises on such fisheries. Thus it came about that among the epicures of Europe the name Cossack and caviar became associated, and a new tribute besides furs came to the Crown from these

colonies fishing along far rivers and producing little kegs of salted caviar.

The reluctant migrating Russian peasant, when he arrived in Siberia, could yet feel the same thrill of occupying and working new soil as did the American pioneers in the northwest. Urged by government agents to follow the long track from their villages in old Russia, and finding in Siberia that the Crown still owned the land, and that life in the village and on the soil must be communal, the peasant could yet take over as much of the rich black soil as he and his sons could work, and, as he profited by the harvests, could grow rich in horses and cattle, and become a prosperous farmer well known at the nearest fair.

This paragraph from Fedor Dostoyefski's "Buried Alive: a Record of Ten Years Penal Servitude in Siberia," may be taken as a true general picture of town life in Siberia in the later period of our narrative:

"In some distant nooks of Siberia, hidden away among the steppes, mountains, and wild woods, there are small towns, numbering perhaps not more than two thousand inhabitants, with their unpretending wooden houses and one or two churches, one in the town and the other in the cemetery outside. They are more like villages than towns. They are inhabited by Ispraniks, Tchinovniks, (judges, police chiefs, and aristocrats) and a host of subaltern officers of various degrees and classes, for in spite of the cold climate Siberia is a nice snug place to live in, and the people are very simple-minded and conservative, innovations are abhorred, and things go on much in the same way as they did two hundred years ago. . . .

"There are many rich and hospitable merchants and wealthy foreigners scattered about the different towns and settlements. The young ladies bloom like roses, and their morals are excellent. Wild ducks, partridges, and game of all kinds fly about the streets. In some places the soil brings forth fifteen-fold. In short, it is a blessed country."

That the Russian author should put these words in the front of a book devoted to a gloomy picture of the life of an exile is indeed assurance that Siberia is quite a livable place.

The opinions of travelers, however, give a less pleasant picture of town life in Siberia than has this distinguished exile. They speak of the dirt and ugliness of the villages; the clinging to the primitive; the inertia of the people; the loud haggling in the market-place, where the entire village joined in the sale of a horse or a cow because their way of living was communal, and each man's business was every man's business. They spoke also of the drunkenness that engulfed the entire village population over holidays—from priests to children—and tied up all travel and business.

They tell also of the sad intellectuals from European Russia—political exiles whose greatest privilege was to live on the fringe of the town. These political exiles belong in the narrative of the Siberian trek, and they appear briefly in our account of the founding of the colonies in Alaska, but they can not be covered by mere paragraphs. There is a volume alone in the story of one of the later of them—Lenin.

## CHAPTER VIII

WE COME NOW to the story of the Russian conquest of that coast of everlasting significance—Kamchatka, the long land suspended like a bludgeon threatening Japan.

Vladimir wrote that the conquest of Kamchatka marked the last stage of degeneration of the Cossacks, "corrupted by the constant intercourse with inferior races during a century's march across the continent."

The leaders of these brutish Balboas were mostly gallows'-birds—rough, filthy little men with large cruel lips and dark native-like skins. The Cossack looks of the proud Free Company had greatly changed, for the blood of the migrant Tartar and Turk, and the native Vogul, Yakute and Buriat was mingled in their descendants. These degenerate Cossacks were as wild and savage as the fierce tribes and ferocious beasts with which they battled for existence.

They were following the trail of the fox, mink, and sable when they penetrated into Kamchatka, but they were crazed with greed when they discovered for the first time the beautiful pelt of the

sea-otter, and were made more avaricious when news drifted east that the Empress Catherine had gone into raptures over the new fur, and had set the fashion for it. Chinese mandarins had preceded the Empress in discovering the value of the sea-otter's pelt, and Chinese merchants were paying at Kiahtka from eighty to one hundred roubles for sea-otter skins.

Catching the fur-fever, Russian or Cossack officials and hunters who came to Kamchatka were ready to commit any crime in the calendar for the sake of the catch, and began to enslave tribes expert in hunting the beast. Entering native villages, the invaders snatched from the back of chiefs their handsome cloaks of sea-otter, and when there were no more in sight rifled graves to strip the sea-otter fur from the remains of the dead.

The discoverer of the sea-otter in these regions was the Cossack Vladimir Atlasov.

In the spring of 1695, having been sent to take command of the distant fort of Anadyrsk, in the extreme northeast, he set forth with thirteen Cossacks.

After fifteen weeks of travel on horseback, with reindeer, or by boat, Atlasov reached Anadyrsk. Finding himself the master of that lonely country and its tribes, he began to consider himself another Yermak, with the opportunity also to add this extreme new country to the empire of the Czar.

Next spring, he sent Luke Morozko with fifteen Cossacks to explore the country to the south. The Cossack returned as excited as if he had found a gold mine, and produced a new kind of fur that shone like star-touched ebony.

"The land is rich in these furs," he said. "The chiefs are clad in cloaks that reach to their ankles. The Koriat tribe is poorly armed, and we can easily conquer them."

Atlasov, as eager as Yermak's Cossacks were when they heard reports of the treasures of Sibir, set out with sixty Cossacks and as many Yukageri tribesmen, and entered Upper Kamchatka.

Dividing his party, he sent one band to the ocean under Morozko, and led the other down the interior. The Yukageri with him, however, had only pretended to be loyal. Watching their chance, they rebelled, slew three Cossacks, and wounded sixteen,

among whom was Atlasov. In the end, however, he killed them all and went on.

When he returned to Yakutsk, he bore with him, as collected tribute, 3200 sables, 10 sea beavers, 7 beaver-skins, 10 gray foxes, and 191 red foxes. On his own account he had 440 choice sables, which he probably secretly divided with the governor of Yakutsk.

As a reward, the Governor sent him to Moscow at the head of a train loaded with tribute, and there the pleased Czar made him chief of the Cossack forces at Yakutsk. Returning to this place he was ordered to return to Kamchatka with one hundred Cossacks, well provided with arms.

Then came a setback. Seeing Atlasov prosperous and honored, an accuser, the servant of one Logan Dobrini, informed the government that Atlasov, five years before, had plundered a Dobrini boat laden with furs for the Chinese trade. Atlasov was found guilty and sent to prison.

Released in 1705, he had influence enough to be sent as commissary to the new dominion. Becoming savage and insolent on the journey he aroused the enmity of his companions, and they sent back complaints to the commander at Yakutsk accusing him of cruelty and theft, and of boasting that if he killed them with the knout he would go unpunished. Fateful punishment was in store for the rogue.

Several years later, Osip Lipin was appointed commander of Kamchatka to relieve Peter Chirikov. The two governors spent months congenially together in Upper Kamchatka fort; then Lipin set out to visit the fort in Lower Kamchatka, and was waylaid and murdered by rebellious government employes led by Danilo Antzypkor and Ivan Kozyrefski.

The murderers took to the forests and were joined by other fugitives until the company increased to seventy-five men. They swore an oath of brotherhood; agreed to share the plunder; adopted a countersign; and chose as their first victim the hated Atlasov, who had been flourishing in his wickedness like a green bay tree.

Thirty-one of them marched to the lower fort, found Atlasov, and slew him. They also waylaid Peter Chirikov and a lieutenant, Joseph Mieronov, and seized as plunder their rich furs.

The naive robbers then sent a letter to the commander at Yakutsk confessing the crimes and asking forgiveness. They accused Chirikov of avarice; of tyranny; of embezzlement of government property; and of buying goods at a low price on his own account and selling them to the natives at exorbitant prices.

While waiting for the pardon, they sought to demonstrate their usefulness to the Czar by subjugating certain chiefs, forcing them to pay tribute to the Crown. They also invaded the Kurile Islands leading to Japan—the first Russians to enter them.

Antzyphor, chief of the mutineers, did not live to learn whether he had been forgiven, for the natives murdered him while sacrificing their own brothers for the sake of vengeance.

Leading his band to a tribe that had refused to hunt or pay tribute, he was hospitably received and given a large hut as quarters for himself and his men. They went to sleep at ease, for had they not taken the precaution to chain their hostages in the same hut? But in the dead of night the natives crept up and set fire to the hut, burning the Cossacks and hostages together. Aware of the plot, the latter urged their brethren to apply the torches.

There were still Cossack mutineers in possession of the upper fort, but when Commander Kolesov came from Yakutsk in 1711, he captured and slew three of the leaders; branded others; cut the nostrils out of others—a historic Russian custom—and fined the remaining rebels. Those who had been faithful he rewarded.

“God is high, and the Czar is too far!”

The saying had become a familiar one in the camps of the ravaging, ravishing Cossacks of Kamchatka, but the Almighty could use the natives for vengeance, and later the Emperor’s feeble attempts through deputies grew stronger and brought some sort of order to Kamchatka.

But by the time the Cossack brigands had been put down along the coast, the sea-otter that had excited their fiercest lust had vanished from the reefs nearby; and the farther islands of the North Pacific, so mysterious in their foggy blankets, were tempting the Russians and Cossacks to revive the skill as navigators which they had acquired on turbulent rivers, and to pursue the sea-otter out into the mists. They had watched squat Aleuts in slim *bidarkas* bring in sea-otter pelts to trade with the natives of

Kamchatka, and their fear of the ocean was weaker than their greed to find and kill sea-otters where they bred prolifically.

Russian traders in Okhotsk, maddened by the fur fever, encouraged the Cossacks in their sea-going hunts, and came together to form little companies to build ships that would stand up under a voyage to the great otter-breeding coast the Aleuts said lay beyond the linking chain of islands.



## MONARCHS AND VOYAGERS SEEKING "THE GREAT LAND"

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### CHAPTER XI

IT WAS PETER who first gave Russia the ambition to have a strong navy.

"Russia," he said, "needs a navy, with experienced commanders. We must draw from the Dutch, the English, and the Danes. But first we must know how to build ships. I will go to Holland and England and apprentice myself to the builders."

Going to Saardam, he ordered a small vessel, and when the keel was laid, took part in the building. The craftsmen called him Peter Michaelov (Master Peter). Later he worked similarly in Amsterdam and Deptford, England. In the latter port he learned the higher arts of shipbuilding.

The atmosphere of the shipyards, the business of building carried on by competitive countries, and the bustle of laden vessels setting out to sea, strengthened his determination to build a navy.

"They would like," he said of the Powers, "to keep Russia in the coils, far from the southern sea, far from the northern sea, though the ocean lies open to all. I will break down these barriers."

Using foreign masters and craftsmen, he started building ships at home and with them practiced crudely the arts of naval warfare.

He launched scores of little vessels for an attack on the Tartar-Turkish town of Azov, and his flotilla carried his soldiers upon the Volga, the Oka, and the Don.

Repelled in his attack by land, he cried:

"Azov can only be taken by sea. I need warships. The nobility must provide the funds. I will build a fleet of twenty-four!"

At Voronesk, close to forests of oak and iron mines, Peter began the shipbuilding, working himself among the laborers at felling trees and sawing timber. This hurried navy he manned mostly with Hollanders and Germans.

Standing in sailor's dress at the bow of his flagship *Ivan*, he lifted his face patronizingly to heaven:

"Jesus Christus, not in vain have I made thee an Admiral of my fleet. Help me and all men of the true faith against the heathen. Let Azov fall into my hands, and I will nail them to the Cross."

He conquered Azov and, true to his promise, crucified the leading generals. Then, to daunt the Turks, he sent a Russian warship upon a special mission to Constantinople.

Having opened a window on Europe for Russia, the gigantic Peter, Craftsman Czar and Shirt-sleeves Emperor, wished to open a window on Asia and the Pacific, and—if he saw through the window lands worth occupying—to send ships and troops there.

He was summoning admirals and explorers and scientists, but he had acted too late to see the fulfilment of his plans. His dissolute life was exacting its toll. There was an agony in his kidneys. He had contracted, it was said, the fatal French disease, which our plain-spoken age calls syphilis.

Studying Russia's past attempts to penetrate the markets of the Far East, Peter raged against the ambassador who in 1689 had signed the humiliating treaty of Nertchinsk. He and his councilors agreed that the document was a wall against Russia's expansion to a desirable part of the Pacific. He asserted that there were three points of importance to Russia: the Don, the Neva, and the Amur.

The acute historian Kerner has recently given a new significance to the voyages of Bering which we are now about to relate. There was a secret understanding with Bering and his associate commanders that they should endeavor to recover the Amur; possibly by an expedition by land. There is proof of this in the writings of Vladislavich, Russian ambassador to China in the time of Bering. He told of the necessity of seizing the Amur route despite the treaty, and then going by sea to some Chinese port which was probably Tientsin.

"We shall need a strong fleet," he said. "This is the task of Bering."

The correspondence of Bering indicates that such a project had been discussed. The great cost of the voyages indicates that more was in mind than discovering an icy coast.

We will go into the intrigues concerning the Amur in the period of Nicholas I, but let us note now these thoughts of Peter the Great:

He was Emperor of a European Russia, and of a Siberian Russia. But was there a new great Russia—an American Russia—lying beyond? Was there a bridge of land between Siberia and America? If the course of the empire was to continue to the east, then he had better anticipate the discoveries of some successor.

The geographers and mariners he had met in Amsterdam, London, and Paris had aroused his curiosity about the North Pacific. Eager to make the charts of the globe clear and accurate, they had urged him to clear up the vagueness as to the coasts of the north of Kamchatka and opposite to it.

The Emperor of war, work, love and drink had returned home from Europe with an enthralling ambition—to try out his new ships and naval officers, to find ports for them. And if there was a new and pleasant country down the Pacific ready for the taking, he might as well seize it ahead of the English. There was also maritime trade routes to China and Japan to be opened. A way must be found to use the Amur and come out on the Pacific below the seas of fog and ice.

He had sent out casually two officers, Luzhin and Eureinov, to find out if Asia and America were united, and to chart all they saw, but they had disappointed him when they returned four

years later, and he began to plan a larger expedition, rallying his failing strength to plot the enterprise. Eager to contribute to the arts and sciences, it was as if he were devoting his last years to grasping at an earthly immortality.

Peter's friend, L. N. Maikov, was in constant attendance on the Emperor during his last days, and gives this record as to Peter's words in planning the greater expedition:

"Bad health has obliged me to remain at home. Recently I have been thinking over a matter which has been on my mind for many years, but other affairs have prevented me from carrying it out. I have reference to the finding of a passage to China and India through the Arctic Sea. . . . In my last travels I discussed the subject with learned men, and they were of the opinion that such a passage could be found. Now that our country is no longer in danger from enemies, we should strive to win for her glory along the lines of the arts and sciences. In seeking such a passage who knows but that perhaps we may be more successful than the Dutch and English, who have made many such attempts along the American coast . . ."

It was only in secret papers that any reference was made to an expedition down the Amur.

Peter's orders to the Admiralty Council, and its replies thereto, brought promotion to modest Vitus Bering, a captain of the Russian navy, who started on his journey in February, 1725.

The Czar's order was: "To find among the deserving naval lieutenants or sub-lieutenants such as could be sent to Siberia and Kamchatka."

The Council recommended Bering, a sailor since youth.

When he received his orders, they bore marginal notes in Peter's own handwriting. They commanded, first, that he proceed to Kamchatka and build two vessels; second, that he go to the northernmost point of Siberia and discover if Asia joined America; third, to look for settlements on the American coast, or the vessels of a western nation. The port of Okhotsk was too far north. If he could establish an American Russia in a warmer climate, it would be worth more to Russia than Siberia. Fearful that foreign powers would find their way to China or Russia

through Siberia, the Czar cautioned the commander not to make known, if he met foreigners, the way by which he reached the Pacific.

But the Emperor of the land and the unattained ocean was soon through with his ambitions and toil. He had gone to investigate God. Catherine his queen, and the mistress of his harem, was waiting in a dress of black velvet to hear the death news: "His Majesty the Czar, God's Key-bearer and Chamberlain, has received the Holy Sacrament and entered into the Lord."

The swords of the nobility were acknowledging her taking of the crown and scepter.

"I will carry out his wishes," Catherine said. "Captain-Commander Bering will report to me!"

After setbacks which delayed for three years the beginning of the ship, the *Saint Gabriel*, Bering sailed from the mouth of the Kamchatka River, following the course indicated by Czar Peter.

The Dane spent only fifty days on the voyage. "Had we gone on," he wrote, "and met with unfavorable winds, we might have been prevented from returning to Kamchatka that season."

We have a notion that if Peter had been living when the report reached the Court, Bering would never have been given another opportunity.

Two years later, and before the second Bering expedition, it was the fortune of Gvozdev, one of the officers left on the *Saint Gabriel*, to sight the America the late Czar had been so curious about. The Cossacks at Kamchatka, going among the Chukchi tribe, heard them repeatedly mention the large country—*bolshaya zemlya*—across from where they stood on the East Cape. They said they had gone across and traded pieces of iron for products of the big country.

Dimitri Pavlutski, a captain of dragoons, had heard these reports, and, the *Saint Gabriel* being at hand, sent word to its officers to go in search of the land said to be opposite the East Cape. When the orders reached the vessel at Lower Kanchatka Post, only one of the officers, Michael Gvozdev, was able to perform

the duty. He made the voyage, and from an island—one of the Diomedes—saw “a large country.”

A Chukchi in a leather boat came out and said that his tribe lived in a “large country” where there were forests, streams, and animals.

Gvozdev wished to go ashore and explore, but there appears in the narrative—a retarding force we meet again and again in the story of these voyagers—timid sailors who hold councils and strongly petition the officers to turn back.

“Taking these arguments into consideration,” Gvozdev noted, “we decided to return.”

It is thought by authorities that this mariner haphazardly saw the American coast.

Meanwhile, Bering was in St. Petersburg making his report to the Empress, and telling of his voyage to the Admiralty Council and to the Senate. His account was received with faint praise by some, and with frank skepticism by others.

Stronger and stronger had come reports to Court from officials and traders in Siberia that there was a large country across the seas from the East Cape. The Admiralty asked, could not Bering, who had been in that very region, tell whether there was this big country, and whether it was close to or joined to Siberia?

Bering’s answer was to suggest to the Empress a second undertaking.

Two years after Bering’s return, he was appointed commander of the second expedition. The wordy instructions issued by the Senate summed up into a command that Bering achieve on the next voyage what the dead Czar had sent him forth to do. In 1743, his advance parties set out from St. Petersburg, and he left shortly after.

Captains, shipmasters, shipbuilders, surgeons, navigators, commissaries, naturalists, engineers, a chaplain and six monks, cadets and sailors—five hundred and seventy men in all. It was a well-selected company. Empress Catherine spurred the voyagers by doubling salaries. The officers could take their wives and daughters with them to Kamchatka. Bering and Spanberg brought their wives.

The times were auspicious for the second venture. The spirit of Peter the Great still ruled the Court, and his ambition to advance the arts and sciences of Russia had become a challenge to scientists to explore Siberia. The fur-hunters had suddenly found beside them scholars who had no interest in money, but instead were willing to freeze and starve for the sake of charts and notebooks.

Among the commanders chosen to go with him, and among the officials he must deal with in Siberia, there was violent jealousy of the Dane. Captain Spanberg, his own countryman, who was to lead a mysterious subsidiary voyage to Japanese waters, was a cruel and greedy man who went accompanied by a great dog which, people said, would tear to pieces victims of his master's fury. On complaints of the Siberians, he was later placed on trial and sentenced to death, but was saved by the Danish ambassador. Captain Chirikov, the Russian, comes out deservedly well in the Russian accounts.

Significant open warning was given to Bering not to cross the River Amur leading down into China, "in order not to awaken the suspicions of the Chinese government." His secret orders, if the expedition went well, might have been the reverse.

Pisarev, newly appointed commander of the port of Okhotsk, had been ordered to gather farmers, laborers, Russians and natives, and to move sheep, horses, and cattle to the country around that port so that Bering's crew and workmen would be well provisioned. Pisarev was rebellious and inefficient. At Yakutsk Bering was again forced to do the work of a recruiting and commissary officer.

Even the clergy accompanying the expedition got into trouble. The monk Filevski, the first one chosen for the mission, was arrested on the River Aldan for assaulting another monk, and for refusing to read prayers for the imperial family.

At every stage of the journey across Siberia, complaints went back to the Court against the Dane Bering. A disgruntled young lieutenant accused him of wasting powder in making fireworks, and in "employing the drum corps for his own amusement."

Five years had passed in preparation. The impatient Empress sent officer after officer to investigate "the doings of Bering." It

was proposed by some that the expedition be abandoned, but then it was considered that the expenditure of 300,000 roubles would be wasted, and that it was better to go on and win new lands that would offset the expense and pay a profit. At last Bering's chief accuser, Pisarev, was relieved of his command at Okhotsk, and under his just successor, Antoine Devievre, the work was finished.

## CHAPTER X

A SHORT TIME before Bering began the second voyage, he had a talk with the young German naturalist, George Wilhelm Steller, who, as a member of the Russian Academy, had been sent out to examine the natural history of Kamchatka. Steller had won favor in St. Petersburg by sending valuable shipments of specimens to the museum, and at this time was eager to be assigned to Captain Spanberg's projected voyage to Japan.

"I have a vacancy in my ranks," Bering said, "and I wish to offer it to you. We need a mineralogist."

"My field includes that science," said Steller. "But it is the wild-life of these coasts which interests me most."

"You'll have plenty of time on shipboard to observe the beasts and birds," said the Commander, "but the work for which I will employ you is that of a mineralogist, and you will make reports only on this subject. You will also serve, when necessary, as an assistant surgeon."

Steller hesitated.

"I had hoped to go with Captain Spanberg to study the birds of Japan."

"My expedition is the most important and must have precedence. As it is, we've been six years getting ready. Come with us, Mr. Steller; this is the enterprise Her Majesty is most interested in."

Steller agreed. Discouraged by Bering as a naturalist, he was yet to win lasting fame on the voyage for his studies of the wild-life of the North Pacific.

Shrewder than most scientists, he accepted sea-otter skins from sailors in payment for medical treatment, and bought many skins



from men who thought they would not return. He brought back to Kamchatka three hundred valuable furs.

On June 4, 1741, the two ships sailed out of Avacha Bay. Captain-Commander Bering was on the *St. Peter*, and Captain Chirikov was on the *St. Paul*.

The troubles the Commander had had with men on land followed him aboard ship. It was a Russian marine habit in a crisis to call a council of both officers and crew. They were communists at sea as well as on land. A communal arrangement existed on shipboard, where all members joined to advise the captain what to do and where to sail, daunting him by preparing statements to submit to the Admiralty, signed by all members.

Bering and Chirikov did not see eye to eye, and there was bickering between Bering and the Russian petty officers, and the Commander's disturbed state of mind was often further provoked by the supersensitive and egotistical Steller.

The fact that Steller kept a journal and was always making complaints probably accounted for the ill-natured behavior of the officers toward him.

"You are not a seaman," they sneered. "You are not in God's council-chamber!"

Even though the naturalist appeared correct in his deductions as to birds, beasts, and seaweeds that could serve the bewildered mariners as guides to where land was, he tactlessly insisted that the officers were wrong and stubborn.

Chirikov, the more resolute of the two, had been told by Bering to proceed in advance, indicating that the latter felt unsure of himself.

On June 20, the wind being strong and the sea heavy, the *St. Peter* lost sight of the *St. Paul*, and though each vessel spent days in searching for the other, they did not meet again.

Two days later, Bering resumed his voyage. He was confused and delayed by a search for a mythical Juan de Gama land between latitude  $40^{\circ}$  and  $45^{\circ}$ .

A note made later in the ship's log illuminates how casually coasts and waters became lasting memorials to ill-fated members

of crews. The Shumagin Islands were enduringly named from this sad happening:

"The quartermaster returned to the ship with 10 more casks and reported that the sailor Kinita Shumagin died on shore. He was buried on the island, which was named Shumagin after him."

On July 17, a clear day, this thrilling discovery was tersely recorded in the log:

"At 12:30 we sighted high snow-covered mountains and among them a high volcano N by W." He had sighted Alaska.

It was St. Elias Day, and Bering named the peak after the saint. He was then 120 nautical miles away from it.

Directing the vessel's course to this as yet unnamed coast of America, Bering two days later anchored on the west side of that sliver of coast—Kyak Island.

Steller sketched in his journal this picture of the depressed Bering at the hour of triumph, a victory history was to dim somewhat by recording that Chirikov, in the *St. Paul*, saw the American mainland earlier.

"It can easily be imagined how happy everyone was when land was finally sighted; nobody failed to congratulate the Captain-Commander, whom the glory for the discovery mostly concerned. He, however, received it all not only very indifferently and without particular pleasure, but in the presence of all he even shrugged his shoulders while looking at the land.

"... in his cabin he expressed himself to me and Mr. Plenisnev as follows:

"We think now we have accomplished everything, and many go about greatly inflated, but they do not consider where we have reached land, how far we are from home, and what may yet happen; who knows but that perhaps the trade winds may arise, which may prevent us from returning. We do not know this country; nor are we provided with supplies for wintering."

Having depended on Chirikov's leadership, since the separation Bering had shown timidity and uncertainty. He was further depressed by the discovery that there were cases of scurvy among his crew, and a lack of means to deal with it.

On August 10, an important decision was made by the ship's

council. Recalling that they had agreed to return to the Kamchatkan port toward the end of September, they came to this conclusion:

"Although, according to our former decision, we should still spend some time in examining the discovered American coast, yet we find this dangerous because of the violent autumn storms and continuous heavy fogs. It is not safe to approach the land, nor do we know the lay of it. There are many sand banks and islands, as may be seen from the chart we have drawn up. We do not even know where to look for shelter."

A glance at the map—the coast of the Gulf of Alaska between Cook's Inlet and Sitka, where Bering touched—will reveal how jagged and uncertain the coast is, and how dangerous in storm or fog.

Fearing that they could not reach Kamchatka without a fresh supply of water, they decided to sail nearer the dangerous coast and find a safe harbor in which to fill the barrels.

Well supplied with water, the *St. Peter* sailed from Shumagin Island on September 6, intending to sail directly for the port in Kamchatka, but violent and contrary winds hindered them. When on September 24 they came in sight of a fringe of islands with the American mainland behind them, they were beset by what was put down as "an indescribable gale from the west which continued until October. . . . We were saved from it with great difficulty."

"Heavy storm . . . 16 men on the sick list . . . gale, squalls, heavy swell; furled topsails . . . strong gale blowing, heavy sea running, clear with passing clouds . . . wind in gusts, heavy passing clouds . . . because of the gale the fore and mainyards were lowered to half-mast . . . terrific storm and squall . . . frightful storm, heavy squalls, waves washing over the deck . . . heavy gale, wet, squally; all day the waves from both sides washed over the deck . . . terrific gale blowing; hauled down main-staysail, carrying only the reefed trysail . . . heavy squalls, and the lee side of the ship under water . . . hove to."

These jottings in the logbook from hour to hour and day to day compose an accurate description of what Lieutenant Waxel called "an indescribable gale." And this later note, "30 on the sick

list," reveals how the continued storm had beaten down the sick crew.

The water was low again. There were only fifteen filled casks. It was agreed to sail north once more in the hope of finding a place to take on water—"without which a great misfortune would overtake us."

On October 23, the keeper of the log recorded: "Today I became ill with scurvy but am not counted among the sick."

Pathetic notes begin to appear in the log:

October 28: "By the will of God, Stephen Buldirev, naval cooper, died of scurvy."

"I have such pains in my hands and feet, owing to the scurvy, that I can with difficulty stand my watch. 32 on the sick list."

November 2: "Southerly swell. By the will of God, Ivan Petrov, the naval carpenter, died."

It was now very difficult to run the ship, because all on board were sick or feeble. They had at this time only six barrels of water. There was no sea-biscuit aboard, and only a little flour, butter, and meat.

The logbook on November 5 has this entry:

"Captain-Commander Bering, his officers, and the crew, met to discuss the question of going to the harbor of St. Peter and St. Paul. We had few men to manage the ship; 12 of our men were dead; 34 were totally disabled from scurvy; only about 10 were able with great difficulty to get about at all and they were not fit for all kinds of sea duty. Among them was Lieutenant Waxel. . . . It was decided not to go to the harbor of St. Peter and St. Paul, but to take advantage of the wind and steer for the shore in sight in order to save the ship and men."

Sailing before the wind to the land, and searching for an anchoring place, they drew near to the land in the late afternoon and anchored. The cable of the small bower-anchor broke, and that of the second anchor broke also.

Steller gives a detailed account of a quarrel at this point, stating that Bering insisted, since they had already risked and endured worse and could still use the foremast and had still six barrels of water, that they should attempt to reach the port in Kamchatka, but with contempt for the judgment of the sick Commander, the

officers insisted on landing in the bay nearby. The Captain-Commander called upon Ovtsin to give his opinion, and the sailor agreed with Bering, whereupon both Khitrov and Waxel cried: "Get out, shut up, scoundrel, rascal!"

A student of the voyage can become quite mystified by the appearance of Ovtsin, but Dimitri Ovtsin was far from an ordinary sailor: he was a lieutenant of the Russian navy detailed to explore the Arctic coast of Siberia. However, because he had had friendly relations with the exiled Prince Dolgoruki, Ovtsin had been reduced in rank and sent to join Bering's expedition. The Commander chose him as assistant.

Later on, after the death of Bering, "Sailor" Ovtsin showed courage and seamanship in arguing that the *St. Peter* be not broken up, but be used the next summer for the voyage to Kamchatka.

Disaster was close to the crew now. When the ineffectual Bering had been overruled and the vessel sent toward the shore, a heavy surf began to toss the ship, and there was danger of its striking bottom. One anchor cable snapped, and a second one was going. Steller gives Ovtsin and the boatswain credit for forbidding the throwing overboard of any more anchors, advising instead that the ship be allowed to drift.

It was good advice, because the surf lifted the ship with its crew of cripples across the bar and into a situation that was like a calm lake, where the last anchor could be cast without danger of losing it.

With the aid of the few men who could stagger about, the forty-nine sick men were helped ashore. All of the major officers—Bering, Waxel, and Khitrov—were among the sick.

Steller was troubled by the disobedience of the sailors in filling the barrels from pools stagnant and alkaline—conducive to scurvy—when he pointed out to them springs of fresh and pure water.

Roaming the shore, Plenisnev shot some ptarmigans, and Steller found some "nasturtium-like" herbs, which they contributed to the Captain-Commander's meal, as a remedy for the scurvy. Other members of the crew killed seals, sea-otters, and blue foxes, and with this diet those not too far gone began to improve and

get back their strength. The entire command, with the prospect of wintering in that desolate spot, had begun to gather wood and build huts.

The Commander, when brought ashore, spent the afternoon and night in a tent while a shelter more snug was being built. His officers marveled at his composure and resignation. He asked Steller what land they were on, and the naturalist out of his lore of wildlife replied that it was not Kamchatka, but a similar country, and that Kamchatka must be near.

Looking ahead as usual, and preparing for emergencies, Bering said, "The vessel can probably not be saved. May God at least spare the longboat."

Berge, Plenisnev and Steller were camping with the Commander when a strong wind blew the roof off their shack. Gathering driftwood in the dark, they dug a pit, covered it with wood laid over it crosswise, covered the top with overcoats and blankets, made a little fire within, and so spent the night. The next day the pit was extended, and the rest of the crew dug a large pit in the frozen sand to shelter the sick members of the crew, covering them over with double sails.

"Some of the sick cried because they were cold, others because hungry and thirsty, since . . . they could not eat anything because of the great pain."

To add to the misery of the crew, there came a plague of blue foxes in "countless numbers." They tugged at the baggage, chewed leather soles, stole the provisions. The creatures seemed to know that this group of sailors was too weak to guard their supplies, or to resist them as they broke into the tents and pits, and dragged out food and things.

To daunt the foxes, the sailors dealt cruelly with those they captured, and sent them running among their kind half-skinned or half-roasted; but these cruelties seemed only to make them more eager to plunder.

The men had each his individual hoard of sea-otter pelts, but in this extremity they appeared of no value, and they were allowed to lie about until they were chewed to bits by the foxes.

The keenly discerning Steller relates that as the otter-skins lost value in men's eyes they began to treasure little things they had

neglected before but which were now essential to life and comfort—such as needles, thread, shoe-twine, knives, axes, and awls.

In spite of the warm nourishing soups which Berge and Steller provided for the Commander and for the other sick persons, Bering grew steadily worse. His death was preceded by that of Andreas Hesselberg, aged seventy, who had spent fifty years at sea. Steller's warm tribute to him contains a barb against the petty officers: "He carried to his grave the reputation of being a pre-eminently useful man, whose disregarded advice might perhaps have saved us earlier."

On December 8, Captain-Commander Bering died of the scurvy from which he had suffered for four months, and Lieutenant Waxel, a convalescent, succeeded him in command.

For all of his grumblings about Bering, when Steller recorded the death of the Commander, he wrote what was probably the fairest summing up of the character of Bering that has been written. It is found in *Bering's Voyages* (Leonhard Stejneger's translation) in the American Geographical Society's research series.

"Vitus Bering was by birth a Dane, a righteous and devout Christian, whose conduct was that of a man of good manners, kind, quiet, and universally liked by the whole command, both high and low.

"After two voyages to the Indies, he entered the service of the Russian navy in 1704 as a lieutenant and served in it with the utmost fidelity to his end in 1741, having worked his way up to the rank of Captain-Commander. He was employed in the execution of various undertakings, of which the two Kamchatka expeditions are the most noteworthy.

"Fair-minded persons cannot but admit that to the best of his strength and ability he tried at all times to carry out the task imposed on him, though he himself confessed and often lamented that his strength was not equal to so difficult an expedition, that it had been made larger and more extensive than he had proposed . . .

"As is well known, the late lamented was not born to quick decisions and swift action; however, in view of his fidelity, dispassionate temper, and circumspect deliberateness, the question remains whether another with more fire and heat could have

overcome equally well the innumerable difficulties of and obstacles to his task without entirely laying waste these remote regions, when a commander such as he was, free from all self-interest, could scarcely keep his subordinates sufficiently under control in this matter.

“The only blame which can be laid against this excellent man is that by his too lenient command he did as much harm as his subordinates by their too impetuous and often thoughtless action.

“While the departed often used to recall, with thanks to God, how from a youth up everything had come his way and how only two months before he had been in happy circumstances, the more is his sad and miserable end to be pitied. He would undoubtedly have remained alive if he had reached Kamchatka and had only the benefit of a warm room and fresh food. . . .

“As deplorable as his death appeared to his friends, so admirable was his calmness and earnest preparation for parting, which came while he was in full possession of his reason and speech. He himself was convinced that we had been cast away on an unknown land, yet he did not wish to dishearten the others by saying so but on the contrary cheered them to hope and activity in every way.”

Bering's wife and two sons were awaiting him in a town in Siberia, and he probably foresaw that to winter on the island, with no shelter against the bitter winds but a boarded hole in the sands, or a shack, would be the death of him. Yet, in the arguments, he made no plea for himself.

One is tempted to inquire into Steller's own professional efficiency in providing remedies against scurvy, but when one does inquire, the scientist is found blameless.

“For although I made representations that our medicine chest, from the very beginning, had been miserably supplied, inasmuch as it was mostly supplied with plasters, ointments, oils, and other surgical remedies enough for four or five hundred men in case of a battle but had none whatever of the medicines most needed on sea voyages and serviceable against scurvy and asthma, our commonest cases; and although I had therefore requested the detail of several men for the purpose of gathering such quantity



of antiscorbutic herbs as would be enough for all, nevertheless this proposition, so valuable to all and for which I merited gratitude besides, was spurned. Later, however, there were regrets enough, and when we had scarcely more than four able-bodied men left on the vessel, I was tearfully begged to help and assist, which then, though with empty hands, I did to the utmost of my strength and means. . . .”

Winter . . . blizzards . . . the beach at times deserted by live animals, the only food available for weeks being dead whales or sea-cows washed ashore.

The fear was always present that the ship and its stores would be destroyed by the storms of winter, but providentially a storm threw it upon the beach, out of such danger, and another storm drove it higher. It was no longer necessary for sick men to wade through sea water to recover supplies from the vessel.

The men who were well went out on exploring and hunting parties, and in April a group of them—Steller, Plenisnev and two helpers—hunted for sea-otters, but a turn of the treacherous weather almost cost them their lives.

Building a campfire beside a cliff, they made ready to pass the night, but a violent storm from the northwest blew suddenly, and as they sat there they were buried in snow. When morning came—almost as dark as the night—each man was a mound of snow, and was becoming lethargic with cold. The more energetic, however, forced the others to get up and run about, and together they searched for a crevice in the cliff.

A cave of ample size was discovered—one that even had a natural opening to carry off the smoke of their fire. With plenty of wood and meat they stayed there rather comfortably until the sky cleared, their only annoyance being the many foxes who had made the crevice their den and objected to the human beings and their smoke.

In January, the officers held a council to determine whether to attempt to use the ship for the voyage in the spring, or to break it up and build a small vessel out of its timbers. Lieutenant Waxel, Master Khitrov, and the lower officers and crew agreed

on a report that the bottom, keel, and stern-post were all damaged, and the rudder lost; that there was not a single anchor for the voyage, and that there was no hope of recovering those that had been lost; that the rigging, shrouds, and cables could not be depended upon; that on the left side, below the waterline, there was a crack crossways; that the ship being deeply buried in sand, it would be impossible to move it; and that therefore, it was not fit for a continuation of the voyage.

The contrary Ovtsin made a counterstatement declaring that the injuries were not so bad that they could not be repaired, and that while the false stem was gone, another could be made. A new rudder could also be built, and that it might be possible to recover the anchors in the summer tides. The bad rigging, and other parts, could be repaired or replaced out of the stores. Finally, in the light spring winds, they might get the vessel into a place where they could repair it. Because of the snow and ice, it was difficult to say how badly damaged the bottom was. "There are the reasons why I refused to sign the report to the effect that the ship was unfit for further service."

A rebuttal, signed by Waxel, Khitrov, "and all the officers and men except the Sailor Ovtsin," restated their opinions and agreed that in March the *St. Peter* should be broken up and a small vessel built out of the wreck.

On May 2, 1742, the building of the new ship—the hooker *St. Peter*—was started. On August 8 and 9 they prepared cables for launching the hooker, and got her into the water. On August 13, with forty-five men, together with food, water, and baggage, they set sail from the place, which Waxel had named Bering Island. Badly leaking, the vessel reached the harbor of Petropavlosk on August 27. Thirty-two men had been lost since the *St. Peter* set out fourteen months before. When the survivors reached Avacha, the people seemed disappointed at their safe return. They had cheerfully concluded that all the crew had been lost, and had taken for their own the personal property left with them.

Captain Chirikov, commander of the *St. Paul*, suffered similar hardships and sickness, but brought his ship back safely, anchor-

ing in Avacha Bay on October 10 of the same year. He had reached America before Bering.

Next spring, Chirikov, worried as to Bering, sailed to the east in the hope of finding the *St. Peter*, and of locating the American coast opposite East Cape. Because of the poor health of his men, and the poor condition of his vessel, he failed in these searches, but discovered for the first time the island of Attu. He returned to Okhotsk as head of the expedition, and three years later was made Captain-Commander. But the sickness he had incurred on the voyage had weakened him, and he died in 1745, a highly esteemed mariner.

One emerges from a study of the careers of Bering and Chirikov with the conviction that if the latter had been in supreme command of the expeditions, time and money would have been saved, and more of the American coast would have been discovered and explored.

# THE NORTHERN BEAR SNIFFS THE RIVER OF THE BLACK DRAGON

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## CHAPTER XI

PETER GOLOVIN, MILITARY governor of the region of the Lena, had a strange fellow as his secretary. This Cossack, Vassil Poyarkov, had learned how to read and write, and was therefore considered highly educated. As expert with the blade as with the pen, he was not satisfied merely to write the reports of forays among the Buriats, Dauri and Tunguse: he wanted to lead an expedition himself. When Golovin could find a scribe to take his place, he gave Poyarkov his chance.

Entering upon adventures that led Russian writers to call him the Columbus of eastern Siberia, he was as beastly as he was brave. His deeds were so revolting to the Chinese subjects along the Amur River that Russia's cunning designs to penetrate down its left bank and gain this advantageous road to China were hampered for many decades.

The Amur—the River of the Black Dragon; the stream that washed a warm and fertile country; the shores inhabited by

Tunguse and Dauri who possessed cattle and heaps of grain, and who wore silver buttons and rings!

Hearing of these treasures from the conquered Buriats, Governor Golovin sent Cossack Maxim Nerphiliev to spy out the land, and he came back and said that the reports were true, and that the people were willing to exchange their cattle, grain, and silver for Russia's furs.

It was this report which stirred Poyarkov to become an explorer of new trade routes. Golovin, scenting honor and riches, equipped him generously with a hundred and twelve Cossacks, fifteen hunters, two clerks, two interpreters, a guide and a blacksmith.

Up the Lena and the Aldan to the source of the Dseya, and down that stream to the Shilka, and then to the Amur—mysterious River of the Black Dragon. On this laborious course Poyarkov spent three years, leaving dead along the various trails two-thirds of his men.

After traveling 7,000 versts and voyaging the Amur to the Pacific he returned to Yakutsk and swore that with a force of three hundred men—who would build three forts—the country of the Amur could be conquered.

After he had made his astonishing report, which indeed gave him deserved eminence as a discoverer of Russia's future road to the waters of China and Japan, his haggard survivors made bitter complaints against him.

In the first winter, they said, when part of the company was isolated in a desolate region, and when the overtaxed natives fled rather than bring food, famine had come and forty men had died of hunger and disease. Others had been massacred by the abused natives.

During the third winter the starving men had been forced to eat the natives of a captured Dauri settlement, whom they killed from time to time, and when there were no more of these they lived on their own comrades who were dying of starvation. Fifty men—natives and Cossacks—were consumed during that winter.

Spring came with springing grass, and those who were well enough nourished themselves on grasses and roots, but the sick who could not stir were an intolerable handicap to the ambitious

Poyarkov, and he ordered his favorites to set fire to the grass at the camp, so that they would perish.

For these barbarities, Poyarkov justified himself by saying that he must have a strong but limited party of men for his important journey down to the ocean.

He had made a decision that aside from his savagery, marked him as a truly great commander. Having journeyed all the way down the Amur to its mouth on the Pacific, he felt that it was impossible to fight his way back against its strong current. He knew, however, that up the coast was the Sea of Okhotsk, which had been discovered by Cossacks from Yakutsk shortly before, and he resolved to return by sailing out into the Pacific, going along the coast to that sea, and from there, by rivers and portages, to make his way back to the headquarters on the Lena.

In the flat-bottomed boats that had brought him down the Amur, Poyarkov, with no ocean experience or navigating instruments, pushed out into the Pacific and, hugging the coast, came after three months to an abandoned fort on the River Ulia, and after wintering there, started overland across the mountains and found a familiar route to Yakutsk.

Preceding Simon Deshnev by two years, the amazing Poyarkov, with his three small battered boats, was the first Russian to voyage on the Pacific. He had opened a way to the Pacific of incalculable value to Russia.

The gratified Golovin, if left to himself, would probably have hushed up the charges against so successful a leader, but complaints of the cruelties of Cossack captains had sorely vexed the Czar, and the governors had been admonished to create a reputation for kindness among tribes yet to be won. Golovin, therefore, referred it to Moscow, and there "Columbus" Poyarkov was sent for trial.

Whether he was knouted or rewarded does not appear, but the chances are that the discoverer of a new route to the Pacific was rewarded instead of knouted.

But among the Dauri, the Tunguse and their masters, the Manchus, the horrid name and deeds that were buried in Muscovite archives, lived everlastingly.

The shame of Poyarkov had become vocal among the savages

as he voyaged arduously along their turbulent rivers back to Yakutsk. From hiding-places along the banks came native cries the interpreters of the party feared to repeat in Russian:

"Oh, you dirty cannibals!"

When there came to the upper Amur region more of these shaggy men with fearful firearms, the word went from village to village that the cannibals were coming. Later Cossack leaders, less educated but more humane, suffered because of Poyarkov. The natives of the Amur, visited by amiable, silken-gowned Chinese tax-collectors, much preferred to deal with them than with the race of Poyarkov.

There was, however, a pleasant side to Poyarkov's report of the Amur River. The men from the Lena region of ice and mud had become enthusiastic as they discovered fruit trees growing along the banks.

On the banks of this pleasant river they had met a Manchurian prince. He was an amiable lord, and he typified—if the Cossacks but knew it—an older and finer civilization which held in contempt the warrior and invader. It appeared that these mild people would be easy to subjugate.

For all of the promise in the report, Golovin, whose forces were limited, decided not to send a second expedition to the Amur region, and the conquest might have been delayed for decades had it not been for the enterprise of the Cossack trader Khabarov.

Erothei Pavlov Khabarov is a link between the early merchant prince Stroganov, and the Shelikov whose fortunes we will soon follow as he founds the first Russian settlements in America.

Beginning life as a peasant boy in the north of European Russia, Khabarov had come out to the Yenisei as a trader. Prospering, he was employing twenty-seven trappers and traders, who went in his boats along the Lena River, trading flour, salt, and other provisions for furs.

The employer had a shrewd method of doing business with these trappers. Outfitting them, and giving them goods to trade with, he arranged with them that on their return they should

give him one-third of all the skins they collected, paying him besides for all supplies except food.

Trading on a large scale, he spent 2000 roubles in providing thirty tons of merchandise for their use. Notwithstanding this volume of traffic, he further expanded, and began employing carters on the road between the Yenisei and the Lena.

Taking council with his far-ranging scouts, Khabarov informed the Governor that he knew of a shorter route to the Amur than the one taken by Poyarkov, and asked permission to enlist one hundred and fifty men for an exploration, which he himself would finance.

Having much to gain from Moscow if the new region should become the bread-basket for the vast barren Lena region, Golovin agreed, cautioning the adventurer not to use firearms, and to avoid violence. The later Russian pattern of peaceful penetration was beginning to show in Siberian government.

Khabarov set forth with seventy men. Of the first river they came to, the Okekma, he recorded:

"In the rapids the rigging was broken, the rudder smashed, the men were bruised; but by the help of God and the imperial good luck, all ended happily."

Retarded at the beginning, the party stopped for the winter on the banks of the Tughir, and later after a difficult portage with sledges and snowshoes, they found the river Urga, which led to the Amur. At the river's junction with the Amur they came into the land of Prince Lafkai, a Dauri prince, but found the substantial towns deserted. Instead of the tiny windows of the northern huts, these houses had large windows covered with paper—probably obtained from the Chinese.

A group of horsemen, including Prince Lafkai, came reconnoitering, and Khabarov, through an interpreter, bade the latter tell them that his purpose was friendly.

The haughty Prince Lafkai demanded: "Who are you?"

"We are peaceful Russians from Yakutsk on the Lena River, far from here, and we wish to trade with your amiable people."

"Do not try to deceive us," said the Prince. "One of your countrymen was here and made war on us. He swore that he



would come back with five hundred men to kill our people, seize our goods, and take our women and children."

"My Emperor has sent me to assure you that his purpose is not to make war. Count my men—there are seventy. Is it not a small company to do slaughtering and enslaving among people who number tens of thousands?"

The Prince turned his horse, saying, "We shall see what kind of people you are."

An old woman, a sister of Lafkai, gave the information that the Dauri princes had fled to a strongly fortified town two weeks' march away, where the wealthy and powerful Prince Bogdoi resided. Yes, there was gold, silver, and jewels in that place, but it was also protected by many warriors with cannons.

The discreet Cossack retired to the stockade he had built at the mouth of the Urga. Leaving there most of his men, he returned to Yakutsk for reinforcements, having made good his promise to find a shorter route to the Amur. He had traveled to the Amur and back in less than a year.

His report to his superior was exciting: the climate was pleasant; crops and cattle were plentiful; the rivers teemed with sturgeon; there were immense stretches of forest abounding in fur-bearing animals.

Again drawing upon his own funds, he enlisted a hundred and fifty men. To this number the Governor added twenty Cossack soldiers, supplied cannon, powder, and lead.

With these volunteers Khabarov descended the Amur, met the gathered princes near the strategic town of Albazin, and defeated them.

A little band of Cossacks defying all the armies of Manchuria, Mongolia and China itself—what an insult to the vast empire that had spewed out the hordes of Genghis Khan!

Albazin had stores of grain. The Cossack garrisoned the town with fifty men. It was to be besieged again and again, was abandoned and retaken, and its name became a symbol of valor in Cossack camps.

The most powerful prince in the country was Shamska Khan,

which was probably the title of the governor of Manchuria. He in turn paid tribute to Bogdoi Khan, the emperor of China.

What was to be done when a prince said that his people could not give sables as tribute, because the Bogdoi Khan—the Chinese Emperor—had already received such tribute?

Khabarov had seen the truth of this: there were men in silken garments hovering on the fringes of the resisting tribes. They were mounted and had trains of fleet, laden ponies. It was hard to lay hands on the Manchu tribute-collectors.

Descending the Amur next spring, Khabarov came to a large town protected by a triple rampart and ditches. He besieged it, and sent word to its ruler to submit and pay tribute. The ruler answered, "We already pay tribute to Bogdoi Khan."

The Russian cannon burst the walls, and the Cossacks, protected by their armor, went through the breach and conquered the town, with only four men killed and fifty wounded.

The Cossack custom of seizing certain leaders as hostages until their people delivered the tribute, failed among the Dauri. When Khabarov seized princes they replied:

"Our people act independently. If we fall into your hands, it is better, they think, that we alone should die rather than that the entire tribe should suffer."

When a people care more for their lives and their lands than they do for their leaders, it is the invader rather than the tribe that has to give in.

The Dauri disappeared with their stores and cattle, and Khabarov, to avoid famine in the winter, descended the Amur in early autumn. Where the Ussuri River, which became as important to Russia as the Amur, flows into the latter, he chose a high point over a sequestered cove and fortified it. The Manchus, informed about the plundering Russians by the Chinese tribute-collectors, were bringing up formidable forces and stationing them along the Amur. And up out of the ancient civilization of China had come guns and gunpowder to combat the firearms of Muscovy.

As Khabarov's flotilla on one of his food-gathering forays approached a town he found a fleet of boats stretched across the

river to block the passage. It was fortunate for the Cossacks that they were riding a strong current and aided by a powerful breeze.

"Réserve your fire until you are close to them," Khabarov ordered his men, "and then aim at the two nearest boats."

The concentrated fire made a gap in the line, and before the disorganized Manchus could close it, the Cossacks were through and away.

When the Atchan tribe tried to burn the stockade, seventy Cossacks made a sortie, with this result:

"The fear of God," Khabarov wrote, "fell upon the heathen dogs, and they could not stand against the terror of the Czar and our weapons, and they fell and we ran at their backs, killing many and seizing prisoners, and the heathens threw themselves into their boats and paddled away on the great Amur."

And again the leader, who had been warned to be merciful, wrote in his journal: "We found twenty-one villages farther down, took hostages there, and slaughtered many of them."

The Manchu Prince Tsinei, with two thousand men and eight guns, along with thirty jingals and twelve earthen petards each containing forty pounds of gunpowder, intended for blowing up the walls, appeared in the spring before the walls of the Cossack fort at Atchansk and attacked with their artillery; but while the noise was terrific, the damage was small. The Chinese plan was to lay siege, but Khabarov, with another bold sortie, scattered the Manchus, seized two cannon and many muskets, eight flags, and eight hundred thirty horses.

Victorious Khabarov, however, at last became alarmed at the increasing might of the Manchu princes, who from the reservoirs of the Chinese army could have overwhelmed his force. A merchant rather than a military leader, he retreated up the river, closer to his base of supplies.

Moving here and there among the islands of the forked and sprawling river, the low-lying craft of the Cossacks were hard to discover, and were missed by a reinforcing expedition under Naghiha that had been sent from Moscow. This party in its search actually descended the entire course of the Amur, eluding bands of mounted warriors on the banks, and flotillas of enemy craft

sent out to destroy them. Seven years after explorer Poyarkov, they also reached the Pacific.

Another relief party found Khabarov, arriving when he was depressed by a serious mutiny. One of the troubles for the Russian government in finding the pleasant River of the Black Dragon was that it invited piracy. Just as Khabarov could hide from the fleet of Shamska Khan, Cossack mutineers could hide from commanders, and with boats and firearms could prey safely upon the mild natives. Soon there were three hundred Cossack pirates upon the Amur.

The mutiny handicapped Khabarov in collecting tribute, for when he went up a river to subdue a native tribe, its chief replied, "You deceive us, for behold, your men run away and plunder our lands."

The leader had also to contend with the Czar's officials, who were jealous because the Czar had become enthusiastic over his reports, and had sent him a company of soldiers with precious gifts—including one to encourage correspondence—a ream of rare writing paper.

Zinoriev, the envious new military governor from Moscow, who met Khabarov at the mouth of the Zeya, brought up charges concocted in the jealous circles of Yakutsk. Seizing Khabarov by the beard, the officer accused him of concealing treasure, put him under guard, and sent him to Moscow for trial. This treatment of the leader disgusted the men and drove them to join the rebels.

With only trifling charges against him, and with the reputation of having repeatedly defeated the princes of China and seized much territory, Khabarov was cheered by the people of Moscow, and well received by the Emperor. Acquitted of all charges, he was appointed chief of the bleak and unpromising district of Lena. However, he never went back to the pleasant banks of the Amur.

Two monuments remain to show what a strategist he was. The two positions on the Amur which he fortified, at the mouths of the Ussuri and the Zeya, became the sites of principal Russian towns: Khabarovsk, and—is your tongue nimble?—Blagoveshensk, or "Annunciation." Before he died he saw the people of

the Lena country deserting by thousands for the inviting lands he had helped to open.

Following him came the gallant and spirited Stepanov as commander of an expedition to the Amur. He defeated a vast army of Chinese. Beketov, another leader who had been exploring the upper waters of the Amur, joined him, and together they built a fort at the mouth of the Kumara, a right tributary.

In the spring, a Manchu army of 10,000 came against them with siege equipment; guns; boathooks; mounted ladders; sacks of gunpowder; wooden shields; straw and firewood. The defending Cossacks numbered only 500, but they battled so desperately that the Manchus withdrew to let famine do its work. Hunger alone drove Stepanov out of the fortress.

While he raided up the Sungari, in Manchuria, the Chinese collected a large army at the mouth and concealed a fleet of large boats among the islands. When the Cossack boats came down the river, they were trapped. Attempting to escape, Stepanov and 270 of his men were slain.

Another commander, Tchernigofski, a glamorous Polish rogue, deserves more than a word. Having been taken prisoner in Russia and deported to the fortress on the Yenisei, his ability had won him advancement, and he was put in charge of a portage, and was later made overseer of a salt-boilery.

While a member of a convoy which accompanied Governor Obukhov to the fair at Kirensk, he was angered at the attentions the official paid his wife—and he incited the escorting company to mutiny. They murdered the Governor. Then the Pole led his accomplices to the Amur and rebuilt Albazin, and it became a refuge for the outlaws. Russian trappers and traders who had remained in the region after the death of Stepanov, gathered there also.

Perceiving, however, that his little force would be unable to protect the place against the thronging Manchus, he boldly wrote to the governor at Nertchinsk asking pardon and protection, and offering the services of his cutthroats to the Czar.

The scarcity of Russian soldiers made the proposal acceptable. The sentence of death against the Pole and his comrades was re-

mitted. Not only that—2000 roubles was distributed among them for their work on the river. In a few years Tchernigofski had reconquered the region; had built new fortresses on several tributaries of the Amur, and had founded along it colonies of Russian peasants.

It should be said that during most of these battles with the Cossacks, the best fighters of the Manchu princes were down in China subduing the supporters of the Ming dynasty. It was their return in force that caused the Russians to consent to the treaty of Nertchinsk.

Peace negotiations were beginning between the Russian and Chinese governments; and the Manchus, miserable fighting men as compared with their terrible predecessors, the Mongol horde, were yet to give the Russians—in diplomacy—an astounding setback.

## CHAPTER XII

THE NEWS THAT the Amur emptied into the Pacific close to the harbors of China and Japan was exhilarating to the Crown. The fact that two Cossack parties had gone down the entire course of the Amur to the Pacific without being stopped by the Chinese, was momentous news.

The Russian policy of peaceful penetration eastward was beginning. The Crown had now a rich field for intrigue and occupation. First would go the explorers and hunters and traders, and then, when the tribes had become accustomed to the faces and goods of the foreigners, the government's soldiers would set up checkered sentry-boxes at strategic points on disputed boundaries to show the bewildered people that the Czar was guarding their peace.

When it seemed necessary, the Czar's ministers took the place of its east Siberian officials in tilting with the Chinese court.

The cause of the first battle of notes was this: A rebel Tunguse chief, Gautimur, having fled into Russian territory, the Chinese Emperor insisted that Arshinski, governor at Nertchinsk, deliver up the fugitive.

Three years later, after consulting the Crown, Arshinski sent Cossack couriers to Peking, bearing an insolent reply, inviting the

Emperor to submit to His Majesty the Czar. The message stated: "Our Lord Czar Alexis Mikhailovitch is strong and great and terrible, but gracious and just, and not bloodthirsty, and our Lord has in an empire of Siberia a great multitude of soldiers trained in the business of war, and they fight desperately."

The Emperor of China did not stoop to reply, but five years later Moscow, in a gentler mood, itself sent an ambassador to the Chinese court, to trade between the two countries.

The Chinese still insisted that Gautimur be delivered up, and wanted to know if Russian settlers along the frontier could be trusted to live there without violence and plundering.

Having found an overland way into the Chinese empire, the Crown began to send semi-official embassies, whose leaders had undoubtedly been instructed to keep journals and make notes that would be guides for later, more forceful expeditions. To give an air of peace and disinterest to an embassy, foreigners were employed, especially the scientific Germans.

Such an embassy was that of Everrard Isbrand, a German born in Gluckstad, in the Dukedom of Holstein, who in 1692 was declared the ambassador of the two young co-Czars Ivan and Peter to "the Great Amologdachan."

The account written by the unknown secretary of envoy Isbrand savors of Marco Polo:

Reaching the Amur after many difficulties had been overcome, the party was met by "6000 Tunguse, all subjects of the Czar of Muscovy." The scribe remarked that "The Cossacks hereabouts are very rich, by reason of their traffic with China, where they are exempted from paying custom." We have a clue here to the opportunities for riches enjoyed by the later Shelikov.

Rivers and deserts . . . then a meeting with a hundred and fifty Russian merchants and three hundred camels.

More rivers and deserts . . . then a meeting with twelve Chinese outguards who, when they perceived caravans of strangers coming, gave notice to one another by signals, until the tidings reached the interior cities of China.

Then a meeting with the first Chinese *adogeda*, or ruler, who refreshed them with some "Thee" boiled in milk, with "flower" and butter, in wooden dishes, and some preserves and sweetmeats.

Later the visitors were served substantial meals of mutton, pork, and pottage, with chopsticks, along with silver cups filled with brandy, and more sweetmeats.

Then the men from Muscovy brought forth gifts for the Chinese governor; sables, ermine, black cloth, looking-glasses, glass bottles, gilt leather, and wood pieces that moved by clockwork.

Onward then, across the desert again, and then rose the amazing spectacle of the twisting dragon-shaped Great Wall, and of Chinese temples, and many idols, including the smoking God of War.

Then more cities, governors, feasts, gifts, and ceremonies, and then at last the coveted entrance into Peking, and preliminary visits by Chinese lords, and entrance into the Hall of Credentials; then a feast with forty silver dishes filled with sweetmeats.

"All of the Chinese women," the fascinated scribe noted, "are of a very low stature, those of quality have very little feet, in which they take particular pride."

Then, on a later day, two heralds-at-arms, inviting the Russians to dine with the Emperor in his throne-room surrounded by three hundred courtiers wearing the Emperor's arms on their breasts and backs, with guards around upholding pikes and battle-axes.

Then tables laden with dishes of massive gold, filled with meats and sweetmeats, and with grapes, apples, pears, chestnuts, oranges, citrons, and other fruits. As a tribute to the Emperor, the Muscovites made a "low reverence" and drank brandy—at one draft—from a cup of gold.

"In the meanwhile," the old account states, "some Jesuits having been sent for, they appeared instantly, and by orders of the Emperor, spoke to the Muscovites in Latin."

Then outdoor ceremonies, with elephants of an extraordinary bigness; and great drums; and hundreds of Chinese lords adorned with the feathers of peacocks, fastened by fine crystals.

Then cannon discharging, and the clamor of bells, and the Emperor entering to the reading of verses "very loud and audible out of a book, which done we heard some very fine singing at some distance from us"; and then the hundreds of lords bent their heads to the ground, three times, one after another.

And then, as it was almost beneath the Emperor's dignity to



receive even the richest gifts—the embassy's presents were returned many-fold; presents for each of a horse, with bridle and saddle; a Chinese cap with a silver puff on it; a surtout of damask brocaded with gold serpents and lined with lambskin; a scarf, a knife, a tobacco-bag; a pair of leather boots and silk stockings; and black satin and pieces of silver.

And at last—no doubt convinced that the embassy had been impressed by both the culture and the war readiness of Peking—a ceremonious and definite farewell.

Fourteen years later, the councilors of the young Czars Ivan and Peter, alarmed at the Cossacks' enforced abandonment of Russian forts on the Amur, sent Golovin as special ambassador with power to settle all frontier questions. His two heralds found the Chinese Emperor angry about the Cossack freebooters centered at Albazin. And the matter of rebel Gautimur still stuck in the imperial craw. However, the Emperor halted all Chinese offensives until the plenipotentiary Golovin should arrive.

The Manchu emperor of China, Kiang-Hi, was sagacious as well as mighty. Conqueror of all princes and tribes that stood between him and the Chinese throne, he was yet greatly bothered by the Cossacks encroaching on the borders of his empire, and by their threats of mighty armies to come.

The Son of Heaven therefore sent a grand ambassador to meet Golovin, to define the boundaries of the two countries in the regions of the Amur. But the Manchu emperor's sleeves were big, and he had many cards up them.

The colony of Nertchinsk, on the Shilka, was selected as the meeting-place. With Muscovite and Oriental pomp and circumstance, the embassies approached each other. Golovin felt that he was well supported with his cavalcade of a thousand imperial soldiers and Cossacks, but the Chinese Emperor had had grander ideas. His ambassador came attended by 15,000 men, in ranks bristling with cannon and other engines of war. Perhaps Voltaire had borrowed from the East his thinking that "God is always on the side of the heaviest battalions." In this Russian-Chinese conference, might indeed made right.

The two ambassadors exchanged elaborate courtesies. The Rus-

sian envoy poured out a conciliatory torrent of words. The Chinese envoy spoke with equal suavity, and apparently his talk had a convincing effect on the Slav, because he nodded cordially throughout. But when the translators told each what the other had said, they were as far apart as when they had begun.

The Russian had advanced the view that the Amur River was the natural boundary between the Siberian dominion of the Czar and the Chinese empire. The right bank had been settled by Mongolian and Manchu people but as to the left bank, Cossack pioneers had already done a fairly complete job of winning it for Siberia, and the natives there were paying tribute to Moscow. The Amur should be the boundary between the empires, with Russia in control of the left bank.

The Chinese ambassador agreed that there should be a wide river marking the frontiers of the two realms, but the Amur River, on both sides, was part of China. Was there not in Siberia a wide and important river—the Lena? The only way to assure peace was to make the Lena the boundary between Siberia and China.

In that case, the Manchus would never be tempted to cross the forbidding stretch of country between the Amur and the Lena. Would it not be wise for the Russians to concentrate upon developing the vast region watered by the Lena, and not risk warfare with the mightier Manchu dynasty by sending more Russian soldiers, or by permitting Cossack pirates to plunder the shores of the Chinese river?

Did the great Czar's representative wish a demonstration that the Lena was the better river for a boundary? See—the Emperor of China had provided for his envoy an escort of 15,000 warriors. With these, the accompanying Manchu commander would march with the Muscovites to the Lena.

The Russians withdrew from the conference to ponder this suave but bristling speech. Meanwhile, in the Chinese camps, there was loud drilling.

After a fortnight, the parley was resumed. The Russians could not agree to withdraw to the Lena, but they would abandon the large region north of the Amur which had been entered by the Cossacks. The boundary was to run across a barren plateau from

the upper waters of the Amur eastward to the Sea of Okhotsk, Kamchatka.

This ignominious treaty—the first ever made by China with a European country—endured for more than one hundred and fifty years.

While Russia withdrew from the left bank of the Amur and lost for decades this coveted water passage to the Pacific, she yet gained a monopoly of the trade from Siberia into China. The Czar could congratulate himself that he had an exclusive overland route to Cathay, and Golovin could claim that he achieved what he was sent to do. The Russians were permitted to send caravans of furs and other merchandise for barter in the Forbidden Kingdom.

We have noted the theory that in the concealed plans of Peter the Great was one to upset this treaty and conquer the mouth of the Amur. It seems probable, for it was then already well known that the Amur led down through Chinese territory to the heart of commerce in the Pacific. Catherine II, inheritor of Peter's spirit, said wistfully decades later:

"If the Amur were useful only as a convenient way to supply our possessions in Kamchatka, its possession would be important."

The French Revolution . . . Napoleon . . . the general war in Europe . . . these absorbing events prevented a conflict between Russia and China for the important waterway. But in 1846, more than one hundred and fifty years after the frustrating treaty, Nicholas I, recoiling from humiliation in Europe, looked to the east, and backed Panslavic schemes to make Russian influence dominant in the Pacific. He needed the Amur route and intended to secure it.



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*PART TWO*

**THE SLAVIC SCEPTER  
ON THE PACIFIC**

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# THE WOMAN WHO WENT ALONG

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## CHAPTER XIII

FIRST THE HUNTER and the trader; then the diplomatic scout; then troops and warships.

Senator Albert J. Beveridge, who went to Siberia and Manchuria to study the Russian advance into the latter country, had the same interest we have in comparing the Russian pioneers with our own Westerners.

"Over and over again," he wrote, "the analogy of these Slav frontiersmen with their American counterparts suggested itself. Here was the same fearlessness, the same daring of the unknown, the same severance from the place of their birth, the same intention to plant in the wilderness the institutions they had left. With the American pioneer it was Anglo-Saxon individuality and the institutions of representative government; with the Russian emigrant it was Slavic communism, and the institutions of autocracy. But here the parallel ends, for with the Russian emigrant all is patience, leisureliness, lethargy."

Approaching the story of Russia's penetration into America, we concentrate now upon an ambitious Siberian couple who

in their day set a swift pace for following traders and settlers.

Put together in one character an enterprising American fur-trader and a New Bedford whaler, and you will have a fair idea of the zeal and industry of Grigor Shelikov, who carried with him on his voyage, among the empty bales he meant to pack with sea-otter furs, the scepter of the Czar.

Think of an early American woman going out on the Overland Trail, and you will have a picture of Grigor's wife Natalya, probably the first white woman to enter the villages of the Aleuts.

It is doubtful if there ever would have been a well-developed Russian settlement on the American mainland if it had not been for this adroit and enterprising couple. Servile and hypocritical in their dealing with the Empress Catherine, there is yet a good deal to admire in the willingness of Grigor and Natalya Shelikov to suffer danger and hardships together out in the clammy fogs of the Pacific that they might win royal backing for a system of private trading-posts in the North Pacific.

In the year of the birth of American independence—1776—fur-trader Shelikov, operating along the northwest coast of Siberia, stood out among his fellows by his courage in building a vessel, the *St. Paul*, to hunt and trade in the Kurile Islands.

This merchant, years before, had suddenly appeared in the town of Kiakhta on the Chinese border. Since the beginning of the old treaty with China this frontier town had been an important market and it contained many Russians who had grown rich on the overland fur trade with China. Sea-otter and sable pelts from the Aleutians and Kamchatka, sent by way of Irkutsk, were in eager demand in the Chinese markets, and importers like Shelikov had a chance to grow wealthy.

Kiakhta was then a typical Muscovite town with one golden-domed church and a group of log houses and shops. Its population of priests, merchants, Cossacks, peasants, and exiles held few souls congenial to Shelikov, but he was willing to bide his time until his fortune was large enough for the grand adventure.

Across a stream lay the town of Chinese merchants—Maitmat-sun. With these shrewd celestials Shelikov dealt. They complained to him that his agents in Kamchatka sent the best furs to



Moscow, but Shelikov retorted that his furs were good enough, and that if there were any defects, they but gave opportunity for the honorable Chinese dealers to make use of their admirably cunning tricks of coloring.

Maitmatsun was a town of gray, windowless, one-story houses made of clay and chopped straw. It was screened from Muscovite gaze by a high wall of planks, by tall Chinese screens, and by pagodas.

Shelikov liked to exchange the drab atmosphere of his town for the exotic air of the Chinese city, with its swarthy Mongols driving clumsy two-wheeled carts; its horsemen in dishpan hats and gowns of deep orange; its Mongolian peasants driving in long-horned oxen; its groups of picturesque nomads from the southern steppes.

The important merchants of Maitmatsun welcomed Shelikov, and were ungrudging in their hospitality of feasts and singing girls. When he went away from these bland, guileful Chinese merchants he maintained his friendships, because he meant to be a king among fur-traders, and Maitmatsun would always be a great market.

Shelikov at last started for Okhotsk, and there the blessings of his Chinese friends were realized. His first project, the voyage of the *St. Paul*, was a fortunate one. After a cruise of several years the ship he sent out returned with furs valued at 75,240 roubles. It was not a sensational reaping, but was satisfactory.

Insatiable for wealth and power, Shelikov knew a similar spirit—Ivan Larinovich Golikov, whose history was a curious one. He had been a tax-collector at Kursk, Shelikov's birthplace, but had embezzled taxes and had been exiled to eastern Siberia. Having been granted some freedom while a convict at Okhotsk, and having amassed or unearthed some funds, he persuaded Shelikov to take him into partnership. He had a persuasive tongue and was handy with the pen, and Shelikov felt that these qualities would be useful to him in the commercial empire he dreamed of.

Natalya was the merchant's second wife. The first spouse had died, leaving Shelikov two children who later became important in his company. The best tribute one can pay to him is to say that Natalya married him, for she was a handsome woman of Russian

and Tartar blood, and her family, residents of Irkutsk, were wealthy. Born into an atmosphere of trade, business was Natalya's god, and the forceful, beardless Shelikov, with his attained position and riches, and his grand dreams of fishing great profits out of the Pacific, attracted her.

Shelikov and Golikov talked often of the success of the British East India Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. Would Czarina Catherine back a private trading company to develop fur commerce? Could she be made to see that such a company might win territory and tribute for the Crown in the vague lands across the sea from Kamchatka?

These wealthy traders had come to despise the little traders employing bands of ruthless Cossack and Tartar hunters. It was natural to want to grow rich, but these uncontrolled traders and trappers were destroying breeds and ruining the fur business. The sable and ermine were fast disappearing in Siberia, and now the once-plentiful sea-otter, whose pelt was the most valuable, must be hunted at great expense and danger in far islands.

Knowing that the Empress was troubled by complaints that the Russian traders had become cruel in their greed, and were killing and enslaving the Aleutians, Grigor, Natalya and Golikov felt that they must show the monarch direct evidence that they could found colonies in the islands of the Pacific which would be civilized and creditable.

Gathering stockholders, and risking their own funds, Shelikov and Golikov built three vessels: the *Three Saints*; the *Archangel Michael and Simeon, the Friend of God*; and *Anna the Prophetess*. If an assembly of Russian saints could assure success, the company had them.

Shelikov was to lead the expedition, but would the going of one of the partners be sufficient to convince the Crown that the company was humane in its treatment of the natives? No—there must be a woman's touch, a woman's report. Long before British and American interests used women as investigators and conciliators, these Russians discovered that a woman's testimony might be effective.

And so Natalya said goodbye to her children and went along.

The three vessels had poor navigators, and were beaten and separated by storms. They were forced to spend the winter on Bering Island, an experience that put to the severest test the wife's courage and endurance.

In 1784, two years after the start of the voyage, Shelikov brought two of the ships into the Bay of Kodiak, already known as a center of sea-otter hunting. In thankfulness for having come to this safe harbor among frowning hills, the merchant called the harbor Three Saints Bay.

It was a significant stopping-place. When Grigor and Natalya stepped ashore and began living there, the history of Alaska really began. The couple, wondering as to the great land that lay beyond, heard the Aleut hunters, as they set out in their boats for the mainland, say, "We are going to Alaschka!"

The merciful intentions of Grigor Shelikov were soon breaking against rocks of reality. What reason had the natives to believe that these crews were different from the other white men who had plundered them of furs and taken their women?

When the islanders at an earlier time espied that first ship, which at a distance they took to be a great white whale, and when they found instead that it was a monster *bidarka* filled with bearded men out of whose mouths came smoke, they submitted, and became slaves in the hunt for sea-otters, but when they saw the bearded gods fight among themselves and bleed and die, they knew then that they were only human, and gave battle with their bone-headed spears.

There had been one Glottov, whose name was passed along from father to son as the chief of cruelty; and then came Soloviev, who sent many men to hunt along far shores and then had his way with their women. He was even crueller than Glottov, because when he had captured a rebellious band he used them to see how many men could be killed by one musket-ball. It would never be forgotten that he tied twelve hunters together in a single row, face to back, and fired a musket-ball through the row, and gave a great cheer when he found that eight had been killed and that the ball lodged in the ninth man.

As for the way of these *promyshleniki* with girls, there was Sergeant Pushkarev who had taken twenty-five of the young

women of one island on his boat to pick berries for the crew. Fourteen of them had been sent ashore with six men, and two had fled into the hills to escape the ravishers, and one had been killed. The rest, when they were herded back to the boat, were in such despair from what they had gone through and what they knew they must suffer that they drowned themselves.

Pushkarev had drowned all the other islanders on board so that there would be no witness to testify to the brutalities, but from the interpreter and the boy who escaped, the news came back to the islanders of how the Cossacks had hurt and killed their women.

Remembering these cruelties, the natives threatened, and Shelikov was forced to capture one whom he could make an exhibit of his kindness. On the next day after the seizure, the well-fed Aleut was released with gifts for the chief, but he returned, a hated fugitive from his people.

Finding a throng of natives encamped on the uplands of Ugak Island, which lay a short distance from the big island of Kodiak, the commander landed and climbed toward them. Answering his shouted words of good will, they cried:

"Enter your boat and leave this island."

To give force to the warning, they let fly a cloud of arrows and bird-spears, but in spite of this resistance the party built a stockade and mounted two-pounders.

Attacking at night, the natives were repelled with great slaughter. At daybreak they retreated to their high fortress of rock.

It was an hour of decision for Shelikov. Any humane ideas he had brought with him had to be suspended. He felt that to succeed he must completely subdue the natives, even though the hill fort seemed almost untakable. From other islands, *bidarkas* were coming, crowded with spear-shaking tribesmen who climbed up into the fortress.

Leading sixty men, Shelikov stormed the hill, and with two-pounders and small arms worked such havoc that terrified tribesmen leaped from the heights to the sea, hundreds of feet below. The others—more than a thousand—surrendered.

But now, how could he force the defeated natives to work for them without bloody revolt? Grigor looked at Natalya and she

returned his gaze. After all, they had come there for success. Promoters must be practical. Perhaps the Cossack chiefs who came first had the right idea. Wives and daughters must be seized as hostages for the industry and good conduct of their men.

Keeping chiefs and sub-chiefs as hostages on board the vessels, the merchant-captain moved the rest to a rocky islet several miles away from the harbor he had chosen. Then he seized many young women. This was a thing he would never report to the Empress. She would not understand that he had first to slaughter and enslave before the work of improvement could begin. Natalya could say that they brought the women together to teach them.

To the men the troubled Shelikov gave hunting gear, and he began to pay them liberally for the peltries they brought him. Natalya did what she could to ease the lot of the women.

An eclipse of the sun was taken by the natives of the entire region as indicating that the gods favored the white chief of fire and thunder.

After a while, the natives became curious as to the strange activities of the Russian workmen Shelikov had brought along. They watched with curiosity the building of houses and forts, and were easily induced to assist. Grigor and Natalya taught school, the husband specializing in the Russian language, arithmetic, and the story of Christ and the Church, with a demonstration as to how to make the sign of the Cross. Natalya taught the girls needlework.

From the original settlement, he led or sent parties to select good points for trading-posts along the islands and the mainland, especially in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet, and he sent a force to erect a fort near Bering's Cape St. Elias. When a war party of a thousand Aleuts assembled against him, he dispersed them before the attack began.

He had proved himself a good organizer and pacifier, and if all the hunters and traders had been like him the original 25,000 Aleuts would not—fifty years after Bering—have dwindled to about 1000. Natalya and he felt that the life of an Aleut was worth more than that of a sea-otter, but few of their countrymen were so merciful.

Pretentious, while good-hearted, and always thinking about impressing Catherine, he took with him on his departure in 1786 a number of native adults and children, that they might be educated as to Russian life on the mainland. They were his exhibits when he returned to Irkutsk.

He arrived there about the time an important fur discovery was announced—one that made him glad that he had spread a network of posts in the Pacific that later could profit by the discovery, but which vexed him in that the captain of one of his own ships, the Greek Delarov, whom he had sent out to search for new fur wealth, had not made this discovery. The credit—and the immediate profits—would go to his chief competitor, the Lebedev-Lastochin Company, whose employe, humble Gerassim Pribilov, a mate in command of the sloop *St. George*, had found remote islands where fur-seals swarmed.

Pribilov had the sea in his blood. His father had sailed with Bering, and was one of the survivors of the *St. Peter*. The son had become a master in the navy, but the livelier employment of fur-hunting enticed him to work for the private firm.

When visiting the Fox Islands, Pribilov heard the story of Eegad-dah-geek, the son of an Unimak chief, whose *bidarka* had been blown north by a storm. Obligated to run before the wind for several days, the young chief came to an island where he remained until autumn.

On a day of rare good weather he saw the peaks of his native island, which called him back. He brought with him "many otter tails and snouts," and an account of multitudes of fur-seals inhabiting that island.

It was time, Pribilov thought, to settle the speculation about the breeding-places of the fur-seals. It had been observed that the fur-seal, up to this time little valued as compared with the scarce sea-otter, came north every year—presumably from the Antarctic—through the passages and channels of the Aleutian chain. They returned in the fall by the same ways, but in the meantime, where did they go? Was the trip north for breeding purposes? If so, the ship that found the shores where their harems were would make a find rich indeed.

But there was fog to pierce—always the fog rolled over the seas and islands of those regions, and it was only by the grace of God and all the saints that one could expect the revealing sun to appear. During the summer, the fog-banks and drizzles of mist shut out the sun nine days in every ten.

Pribilov was searching for fragments of land in the heart of the Bering Sea. Their distance from other coasts was sufficient to keep them unvisited by natives of those islands.

It was a wild music in the winds that finally guided Pribilov to the islands. On a day in July, 1786, his vessel, while close to the shore of St. George, was wrapped in a mist so dense that he could scarcely see the length of her. There came to him, however, the roars and barks of the fighting bull seals, and the softer sounds from mothers guarding their young. It was to be a song of destruction for all generations of seals thereafter.

The modest Pribilov took possession of the seal-swarming island and gave it his vessel's name. The sailors he left to guard the island—how strong must have been his discipline that they should be satisfied to be left thus marooned! Later, in clear weather, they discovered the peaks of St. Paul, thirty-six miles to the northwest.

Starting out the next season to return to the island, Pribilov soon learned that his secret was out. He was trailed by a dozen ships, and they found the islands and competed in seal-killing. Showing some sense of gratitude, they called the islands, The Pribilovs.

Lamenting that his share in the company whose agent had discovered the seal rookeries was a small one, Shelikov bought secretly a larger interest in it. His policy was to prosper with his own company and to share besides in the earnings of its competitors. Poking his nose into their affairs, he came to know how to acquire total control.

Golikov was fortunately at Kursk when Catherine II, in company with the French ambassador, Monsieur de Ségur, passed through the province in her journey through southwest Russia. She was fifty-two, and stout, but Russian rulers must travel that

the officials and moujiks know who wears the crown. There she was, then, riding through the cherry orchards and impressing—she hoped—the polished French ambassador with her control over her expanding empire.

At Kursk, who was the middle-aged merchant admitted to the royal chamber? Gossipy townspeople confided to the guard that he was one Golikov, who fifteen years ago had embezzled liquor revenues and was sent to Siberia. There was a big bee buzzing in the redeemed merchant's hat. He had told his neighbors upon his happy return that he had made money in Siberia; that he was a partner in a project to develop colonies in the Pacific.

His interview with the Empress seemed unpromising. In her long career, Catherine had never become interested in the far Russian settlements along the Pacific coast. Her concern in the East was the Amur, and just then she had been so busy looking toward the Black Sea that the window on America had become misted. Having seized the Crimea from Turkey, she was eager to take Constantinople.

It was true that the trustworthy Chicherin, when governor-general of Siberia, had urged her to send ships and troops to protect Russian discoveries and the fur trade from the English and the newly arriving Boston men, but she had no soldiers, ships, or funds to spare for defending remote territories. She had made her decision thirty years ago:

"It is for traders to traffic where they please. I will furnish neither men, ships, nor money for further schemes. . . . I renounce forever all possessions in America."

It was this rock that men like Golikov were trying to wear down.

A short thick man who appeared even stouter in his frock coat trimmed with fur, Golikov fell on his knees before the Empress and thanked her for permitting him to return to his native place. Probably she had never heard of him before, but she took the compliment as a tribute to her almightiness and bade him arise.

The governor at her side whispered to her that the pardoned embezzler was expiating his crime by devoting himself to writing the activities of Peter the Great, and Catherine, pretentious her-



self in literature, said that it would be very nice to have the monumental work in the royal library.

The reception was over, but the meek Golikov suddenly grew bold and unrolled a big map.

"Your Majesty, permit me to show you a new chart of your possessions in the Pacific."

Observing that the French ambassador was stretching his neck, Catherine looked at the map. Perhaps it was opportune to have a chart that would show the envoy her hold on the north Pacific.

As his finger traced the Russian islands, Golikov poured forth an account of how his partner Shelikov—"and his wife also, Your Highness!"—had sailed to Kodiak Island and had established a mission and trading-post there in the name of God and Catherine.

The Empress heard him through.

"It is a different report from those I usually receive," she said. "The unselfish and merciful work of Shelikov—and yourself—merits a reward. What may we grant you that will assist you in your good work?"

This was the moment. The effusive trader risked becoming practical.

"With our advanced and humane ideas—so different from the cruel methods of the others—we hope to be granted the exclusive right to found trading-posts in selected areas of the Pacific."

Catherine's graciousness vanished. Ah, there was selfishness here, after all. What else could one expect of an embezzler? And, besides, what if these traders, settling along the coast of America, should cause trouble with England and the new United States?

"Your request will have to be carefully examined by my ministers."

To her secretary she said, "Arrange to have these partners come to court so that we may have a full understanding of these things."

The undiscouraged Golikov sent a message by fast post to Irkutsk bidding the Shelikovs come, and six months later, having traveled in back-breaking conveyances behind swift little horses, they came to awe-inspiring St. Petersburg.

## CHAPTER XIV

ONE OF THE families that welcomed the Shelikovs to the city of Peter was the political-minded Rezanovs.

The head of it, Pyotor Gavrilovich Rezanov, Registrar of the Senate, was a veteran of the Civil Service, and had at one time resided at Irkutsk, where he was president of the Court of High Equity. Natalya and Grigor had been proud to have the official come to their house, and now, in the strange and overwhelming capital, they were delighted to be received by him.

With a daughter at home past the marriageable age of thirteen, Natalya was instantly interested in their host's rather snobbish son, Nikolai. Courtly but aloof, his conversation about the business of the ministries checked any wish they had to talk about the success of their own trading company. How unimportant this young man made them seem!

Natalya, however, was not daunted for long. Money was powerful in St. Petersburg as well as in Irkutsk. It would appear that young Rezanov, unmarried, would need a backing of wealth to support his ambitions, for one could see that his health was frail. How sad that a youth disposed to sickness must be reared in this city surrounded by cold marshes and with so little sunlight! Eastern Siberia, with all its rigors, would be a better climate than this for him.

She listened attentively as the proud father sketched his son's career. Obeying the law Peter the Great had made, that at fourteen the sons of nobles must enter the Military or the Civil Service, Nikolai at that age had chosen the army.

Though he hated the routine, he had advanced beyond latrine-cleaning and mounting guard, and at eighteen had joined the Izmailovski, one of the proud regiments of the Imperial Guard. At twenty-three, he had been advanced to captain. Quick to learn, he could converse in French and German, and had a fair knowledge of English and Spanish.

His ambition to win a place at court was whipped up by his being chosen commander of Catherine's personal guard of honor when she rode with the French ambassador through the province of Kursk; and in his talk with the provincial Shelikovs, his mem-

ory clicked to the name Golikov. Was not that the name of the former exile who was writing a ponderous life of Peter the Great? Yes, he remembered the fellow when he was admitted to the presence of the Empress. So the forgiven embezzler was a partner of Shelikov—hum, how interesting!

Suddenly Grigor Shelikov began to talk of his experiences in the Pacific. Watching the supercilious young captain, Natalya saw him become absorbed in her husband's curious narrative. It appeared to have dawned on the young man that here was his opportunity to grasp the far affairs of the empire. She was delighted to note that, toward the end, Nikolai popped questions that kept the talk going deep into the night.

These accounts tied up with the fascinated young man's ambitions. He had about decided that he could make more progress to a grand diplomatic career if he resigned from the Guard and entered Civil Service, which had doors opening into court life. He stored in his mind the amazing things Shelikov told him, and felt sorry that he had at first been condescending to the man from Irkutsk, who was really a remarkable fellow.

The Shelikovs were speaking to officials as expansionists of the empire. They told of how while they were on Kodiak Island they saw English ships come and lay claim to islands visited years before by Russian hunters. Why, the far-off East India Company had actually sent two ships that departed with cargoes of furs worth 120,000 roubles!

"If the Empress would give us authority and control, we could afford to employ our own defending forces, and the North Pacific would be safe for Russia against the English, French, and Spanish—yes, and against the Americans pushing up to Russian waters."

To help her make a decision, the Empress sent for Jacobi, Governor-General of eastern Siberia. How trustworthy, she asked him, was Grigor Shelikov?

"He is completely trustworthy," Jacobi said, "and I do not hesitate to urge that the control of the Pacific islands be given to his company. He has always been active in advancing the interests of your empire. I have given him copper shields to erect on the

islands his hunters discover. He is a man who loves the empire and mankind."

The Empress listened with reserve. The Governor-General might have had an understanding with Shelikov. She knew from many experiences that her governors often backed private concerns for their own gain. As to Shelikov, he had been accused in complaints by rivals of being less public-spirited than his petitions indicated. All of these trading companies, she believed, had the prime motive of profit. However, in September, 1788, Catherine signed the ukase:

"As a reward for services rendered to Our Country by the merchants Golikov and Shelikov in discovering unknown countries and establishing commerce and industry there, we most graciously do confer upon them both swords and gold medals, the latter to be worn around the neck with our portrait on one side, and on the reverse side an explanatory inscription that they have been conferred by the governing Senate for services rendered humanity by their bold and noble deeds. . . ."

Catherine had not granted the monopoly, but the partners had this comfort: the honors would give them valuable prestige on the Pacific coast—prestige they could use in crushing smaller companies. Without a written imperial endorsement, they were yet privileged to build more ships, explore new places, and found new colonies. With private wealth, they might protect their posts in the North Pacific against all comers.

When receiving the congratulations of the Rezanovs upon the awards, Natalya had invited Nikolai to visit them at Irkutsk. He had thanked her warmly, had said that he had just been appointed secretary to Derzhavine, the Secretary of Petitions, and expected to be caught in a blizzard of documents.

"But if I can come, I will, and gladly!"

"Secretary to the Secretary of Petitions," said Grigor Shelikov. "Well, we with our island colonies often find it necessary to send petitions to Her Majesty, with ideas we believe are for the good of the empire. We are glad they will pass through friendly hands."

Strangely enough, a later petition from the Shelikov-Golikov

Company was the means of extricating Nikolai from a delicate social position, and of sending him out of harm's way to the far and bleak refuge of Irkutsk.

When the irritated Catherine removed the secretary's chief from office, it was Nikolai who went into her presence to present and explain the petitions. The amorousness of the Empress had not aged with her body, and Zoubov, her favorite, age twenty-two, was suspicious of this sudden elevation of the smooth Rezanov. With his chambers next to her bedroom and connected with it, Zoubov found it was disturbing to hear the suave Rezanov enter every morning with a mass of documents that required confidential consultation. Many times, in Catherine's uxorious past, this had been the way by which young courtier or guardsman came to favor. It sharpened Zoubov's jealousy when his mistress praised the chief clerk as being a model of efficiency, and he prepared to remove a likely candidate for Her Majesty's hospitable bed.

The fastidious Rezanov was disgusted at the Zoubov role, and had no ambition to replace him. One would have to be a very lusty person to fill that role. Better to be a lamb in Siberia than a bull at court.

In his dangerous dilemma, there came happily into his hands two urgent petitions from the Shelikov-Golikov Company, asking that the Holy Synod appoint priests for missionary work on the Pacific islands where the company's trading-posts were, and that a Siberian consignment of exiles—blacksmiths, carpenters, shipwrights and farmers—be sent to the settlements.

With the approved petitions in his hands, Rezanov went to Zoubov, the unofficial minister.

"I beg of you," he said, "that I be appointed Her Majesty's agent to see that the important measures in these documents be performed. Would it not be wise for the court to supervise the sending of the priests to those unknown regions? Her Highness would wish them to be well treated."

Zoubov saw that Rezanov was removing himself from his path.

"When I get Her Majesty in the mood I will persuade her to sacrifice to this duty her very efficient clerk."

Some months later, Rezanov arrived in Irkutsk.

"Your petitions have been granted," he told the astounded Shelikov, "with the provision that I am to look after the welfare of the clergy in the new colonies, and to supervise the care of the exiles."

The merchant prince, since sending the petition, had received a protest from his new manager, Baranov, against the coming of many priests who consume food and would be exempt from toil, and Shelikov was not eager for court approval of their going. It had been Natalya's idea.

Worrying also to the merchant was the presence of the questioning young courtier.

But, as usual, Natalya and he put their heads together, and a sage scheme resulted: they would take the young man into their house and remove the danger of friction. Heartily they invited the son of their dear, dear friend to live with them.

The lonesome Rezanov moved gladly into the luxurious house.

He found Grigor's son, Ivan, not too much of a lout. The older girl had recently been married to a young merchant, Buldakov, a future partner in the company, and Rezanov found some common ground with them. The younger daughter, Anna, fourteen he looked at speculatively. His bachelorhood had got him into difficulties at court, and Anna was slender and vivid and had the charm of the well-bred women of her father's Ukrainian stock. Her family's wealth had given her opportunities to develop taste and follow the new fashions.

As to Anna herself, the entrance of this court sophisticate was delightful. It was amazing that he who had been captain of the personal guards of the majestic Catherine, and had come fresh from her fat and dimpled elbow, could sit among them and chat without conceit about the grandeur and drama of royal life.

Who was that at the door? Paul? Peter? Please tell whichever one of her beaux it was that she was busy that evening. Captain Rezanov had promised to tell her of a ride he had taken with the Empress down through the cherry orchards into the land of her father's people—the flowery Ukraine.

The mother's romantic project was coming true. She had persuaded her husband that while it would have been nice to have

had another fine young merchant as son-in-law, Rezanov, with his grand manner and court connections, could be even more useful.

The young man from St. Petersburg had come more and more to think that it was the duty of a diplomat and an intellectual to marry wealth. How seldom it was that a poor but ambitious young man had a cornucopia of riches and pleasures brought to him by a vivid young girl who would give herself with the present. He hoped he could satisfy her hunger for life. True, she had crudities, but the harem-like seclusion of the noble families of the capital would protect her from ridicule until he had seasoned her. His father and mother would enjoy refining her.

Yes, he himself would be sneered at. The men whose favor he would want at court would say behind his back that his fortune had come from maltreating native-hunters, and slaughtering wildlife, and trading with the Chinese, but he knew they would come to his feasts and want shares in his fur-company. And would any of them have the knowledge of roads to China and Japan which he would acquire by entering the Shelikov family?

They were all waiting for him to propose, and Anna was putting away her girlhood and alluring him with a nice blend of coyness and boldness. The blossom had become a rose and was bending toward him to be taken. When he kissed her he found out that she was more of a woman than he had imagined.

A quick marriage was talked of, but there came an interruption of duty. From a monastery near St. Petersburg the missionary priests were on their way to Irkutsk. God help them! And from prisons and mines along the Siberian trail the haggard exiles were trudging also, their hearts freshly aching that they were being sent even farther from their loved ones in old Russia.

He met both companies, and Shelikov and he went with them on the plunging flatboats up to the waters of the Baikal region, into the Lena, and then on to Yakutsk, and then by horse to Okhotsk—an interminable, killing journey.

Leaving the worn-out priests and miserable convicts in Okhotsk to await transportation next spring to the islands, the two rode home. God, what a preparation for a marriage bed—this road might be the death of him! Why, even Shelikov, whose adven-

tures had made him as hard as iron, was suffering and losing weight.

On the hard road back Rezanov kept thinking of the Pacific Ocean, whose mists had challenged him in the miserable settlement of Okhotsk. Dreaming of a career as a world adviser to the Empress, he said to himself what a magnificent thing it would be to become the Russian envoy who would widen the way into China, and break open the closed door of Japan.

Back in Irkutsk, his aches salved, he rallied his strength to be "as a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber." He decided not to assume the role of a courtier, but to put himself on a level with the people he was marrying among, and to try to feel at home in the belted tunic and the high leather boots of the merchant class.

The brides of Russia had advanced since the days when the bride gave the groom a whip to signify that he was her lord and that she would obey him. Instead, Anna gave him a lock of her hair, a soft, silken token of the ancient lash. As for himself, he felt a little foolish when he conformed to the marriage custom by giving Anna a gift of bread and salt to symbolize that he would support her as well as he could.

Holding lighted candles before an ikon of the Blessed Virgin, Anna and Nikolai were married, and were celebrated in a wedding feast exceeding in splendor and courses any feast ever before held in eastern Siberia. Bridal customs were free enough in Irkutsk for Anna to attend the feast, and be permitted to share with her husband in the rounds of champagne bumpers. But Rezanov was always a cautious fellow, and he was only slightly intoxicated when he passed down the line of the uproarious guests to the wedding chamber.

Next day, with eyes shining through her tears, the cushioned Anna cuddled down beside her husband in the horse-drawn conveyance, and faced the road of dreams-come-true. She was on her way to be that most envied of girls—an upper-class bride in St. Petersburg.

However, the shadow that pursues happiness soon caught up with her. The journey to Okhotsk her father had taken with her



fiancé had been fatal. A year after Anna's marriage, news came that he had died. The message from her mother bade her not to come to Irkutsk; she, Natalya, was coming to St. Petersburg to plan the future of the company with Rezanov.

Mother came, and her son-in-law was surprised at her forcefulness. The time had come, she said, to strongly petition the throne to permit the Shelikov-Golikov Company to develop into one like the East India Company or the Hudson's Bay Company.

He drew up a chart for the grand new company and a code of laws, and gave them to influential friends to submit to the weary Empress. Grand Duke Alexander, her grandson and favorite, approved of the enterprise. His brother Constantine gave encouragement. This brave fellow Rezanov had given them a new vision. It would be pleasant to spend vacation on the luxurious coasts of Cathay. Both of the grand dukes permitted their names to be used as sponsors.

Catherine II died suddenly, and her successor, the uncertain Grand Duke Paul, disapproved of the project. He penetrated to the core of it when he said that it was just a scheme for enriching a few merchants by oppressing natives. But, in spite of this most formidable opposition, Rezanov worked on the nobility. His young wife's dowry was entirely composed of the stock of the Shelikov-Golikov Company. All of its profits came from the colonies in the Pacific, and future profits would depend on its expansion to the shores of America.

Wearying of his pestering mother-in-law, he persuaded her to return to Irkutsk and buy up smaller companies as a nucleus for the great company he hoped to obtain authority for. Natalya went back, and formed the United American Company.

Two years later, when Paul formed an alliance with Napoleon against the English, the Czar was in a mood to listen to Rezanov's warnings about England's encroachments in the Pacific. A copy of *Vancouver's Voyages* published some months before in London was useful to Rezanov in showing how the English had made their headquarters in Nootka Sound, and from there were poaching on Russian territory and robbing the Russian traders of their commerce with China.

On June 8, 1799, the uncertain Paul called his secretary, granted the charter, and confirmed the merger of companies Natalya had made at Irkutsk. Rezanov's triumph in diplomacy occurred on his thirty-fifth birthday. Admirers began to call him "The Columbus of the Pacific."

The charter was issued to the Russian-American Company. Its term was for twenty years. All the land from 55° of north latitude and the Kamchatka chain of islands—the Aleutians—was to belong to the company, with exclusive privileges of renewal. It was to have the right to fortify towns, use ships, make war, hold commercial intercourse, and make treaties with surrounding powers all at its own discretion. It would have judicial powers within its territories. Only shareholders could be employed in the administration of its colonies. All rivals, no matter how long they had lived and labored in Russian America, must leave the territory.

Across the list of rules, the Czar wrote, "Amen, so be it."

There was a joker in the agreement that confounded partner Golikov. The clever Rezanov had obtained a special decree which stipulated that only a relative of Grigor Shelikov, deceased, could be chief officer of the Russian-American Company.

Emperor Paul was murdered two years later. Alexander I, who succeeded him, was fond of Rezanov and appointed him to the Privy Council. He approved of the new company and supported Rezanov's plans. The Emperor himself, his wife, and the Grand Duke Constantine, became stockholders in the company. Men of arts, sciences, and letters consented to serve on the Board of Directors.

Rezanov urged the Emperor to strengthen the Pacific possessions while Napoleon was keeping the European powers busy. Alexander, listening seriously, said, "You have our trust in your plans, let us proceed swiftly. . . . But patience, Nikolai. When you speak of the American coast, remember only that we have much to do on our own side first."

Soon, for his own sanity, Rezanov was forced to plunge deeper into his charts and projects. His darling Anna had died in giving birth to her second child.

## SHIRT-SLEEVES AUTOCRAT

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### CHAPTER XV

WHEN PROMOTER SHELKOV first met the future general manager of his far-spreading company, Aleksandr Baranov, the latter was a young man struggling to make ends meet in Irkutsk. The town was 3500 miles away from St. Petersburg and he had come a long way to it, and would wander much farther.

His father, Andrei Baranov, was a storekeeper at Kargopol, on the old Finnish border. The traffic that went through the town on the way to Moscow from the icy sea in the north allured the boy, and at fifteen Aleksandr ran away from his father's store and went to the glorious city. Son of the lowest degree of shopkeepers, having no friends or influence, he started sorely handicapped.

However, his eagerness for work got him a job with a German firm, and he stood as a clerk in the Moscow market selling ribbons and kerchiefs to chattering women. Disgusted at this, and discouraged as to his prospects, he went back to Kargopol. There, without much love for the girl, he married, and had a daughter.

At thirty-three, the restless fellow left his wife and went with

his brother Pyotr over a road whose allurements were toil, hardships, fur-fever, and possible fortune.

They came eagerly to drab Irkutsk, but the class distinctions of Moscow were in force even in this crude, remote city. He became bitter against the merchants who would not admit him to their guild, and the grand ways of the traders Shelikov and Golikov made him dislike them, though they were unconscious of his scorn.

But opportunity was there, and he was a man to seize it. Before long he halted his career as a wandering trader to become a partner of a Russian and a German in a glass factory. Despite his lack of formal education, he absorbed information, and when he read in a scientific paper of a process of making glass, he experimented successfully. The big men of Irkutsk were astounded to see a sudden glass factory in their midst managed by the upstart Baranov, and later they were amazed when Count Ostermann, chancellor of the empire, praised him as a pioneer in glassmaking.

Here was success enough for the average man, but when the factory was strongly established, Aleksandr and Pyotr took their savings, bought a flatboat, loaded it with goods, and poled northward over 1800 miles by way of the Lena to the cluster of miserable buildings called Yakutsk. From there, by reindeer train, they pushed north into the forbidding tundra country, and began trading with the Chukchis, and with little bands of Russian exiles in the God-forsaken country.

Aleksandr was then forty-two, but his slight frame was vigorous and his dull years as a factory manager had sharpened his zest.

The fur lord Shelikov had watched Baranov's change of occupation with keen interest. With his own vast egotism, he decided that Baranov's sullen aloofness was to be expected from one who had never been admitted into the Irkutsk Merchants' Guild, and into the social circles of which it was the center. Seeking a manager to succeed the dissatisfied Greek whom he had placed in charge of his trading-posts, Shelikov said to his partners, "There is our man!"

When the offer was made in Shelikov's condescending manner, Baranov came back sharply with a refusal.

"I have had enough of partners and their scheming. That is what I have had to endure for eight years at the glassworks. I want to be free of it."

But his quaffing of the liquor of independence was brief. The trading-post he bravely founded on the Anadyr River tempted the savage Chukchis, and they plundered and destroyed it. About the same time, news came that a caravan of furs Baranov had sent to the Chinese market had been seized by Cossack outlaws.

From his ruined post in the north, the trader made his way through the mountains to Okhotsk, and there he told his troubles to Johann Koch, the military commander of the region, whom he had known in Irkutsk. Commander Koch was an example of the way the Crown took into service men of ability from other races. Having served as a surgeon with the Russian army in the Crimea, the German Koch, for good service, had been promoted to his present post. In gratitude to the Empress, he stamped the imperial coat-of-arms on copper plates, and gave them to trading-parties to fasten to trees on shores they discovered.

He listened sympathetically as the discouraged trader told his story, and tried to help.

"Shelikov is here in the *Three Saints*. He is loading her to send to Kodiak Island with the winter supplies. He wants a new manager, and will pay well."

Baranov shook his head.

"Not me! I do not like Shelikov and his partner, and have already refused the post. He'll think he has me at his mercy now, but my credit is good, and I have some income from the glassworks. I'll start over again."

Koch admired this man, and wished to have him as an unofficial agent of the empire. A leader like this would put up Her Majesty's copper plates in many new places. He talked earnestly to the trader of his duty to his Empress and country, and Baranov at last agreed to talk to Shelikov.

The things which the glassmaker had said at Irkutsk still rankled Shelikov, however, and Baranov, at the new meeting, was surly, so the talk came to nothing.

But when autumn came, and it was time for the *Three Saints* to leave, Shelikov was desperate for a new manager, and cordially

and forgivingly offered Baranov ten shares in the Shelikov-Golikov Company for five years of service.

Speaking again to Koch, Baranov looked forward five years, estimating what would happen to his fortunes if the English appeared in force and took over the outposts. And then, wasn't there the possibility that the Empress would send naval officers to supervise the trading-stations? He despised the overbearing breed.

Koch pledged that if Baranov would work for Shelikov, he, as governor of the region, would protect him against injustice, and would permit him to exercise—unofficially—the authority of a vice-commander. As to keeping order in the colonies, Baranov could flog any men guilty of disobedience, rape, stealing, or knowingly spreading venereal diseases among the natives. Murderers he should chain and send to Okhotsk. It would be a crime to make liquor and evade the payment of taxes, and men found doing this should be dealt with as severely as murderers.

And so at last, at a copious champagne feast given by Koch, prejudices were drowned in bumpers, and Baranov took the job.

With fifty-two men, the new General Manager sailed. Misfortune still trailed him, however, and the decrepit *Thee Saints* was wrecked on the way. Cast up on one of the Aleutian Islands, Baranov and his crew spent the winter in dugouts lined and roofed with driftwood.

Boiling sea-water for salt, living on shellfish, roots, salmon, and a dead whale, he busied himself with learning the ways and language of the Aleuts, and was sufficiently persuasive by spring to acquire three large native *bidarkas* capable of transporting his party. In these he voyaged six hundred miles to the Shelikov settlement.

To Shelikov he wrote:

"My first steps into this country were attended by misfortune, but I am determined to change that luck or go down fighting."

Fortunately for the new General Manager—who was sick with fever—the weather was pleasant when he arrived at Kodiak Island, and the sight of blue skies and far-spreading grass and moss was cheering. He saw encouraging prospects of sustenance

in the twenty miles of pastureland that ran up the gentle slope of the mountain range. When he was well enough to move around, he found on the island's northern side a good stand of spruce.

As the resigning manager Delarev took Baranov through the group of five houses, and the barracks with its offices and apartments, he complained that his own failure was due to the poverty of the Company.

"The *Three Saints* is lost, and has not been replaced. Boats come seldom, and they never bring enough men and supplies."

After his association with Delarev, Baranov freely admitted that he was replacing a very good man. The Greek had come to Prince William Sound with Shelikov. He was glad to be relieved from the post, and planned to go to St. Petersburg.

"It's the fort on Cook Inlet that is giving us the most trouble," Delarev had told Baranov. "I'm afraid I'm responsible for our competitors going there. That's what provoked Shelikov. The hunters of the Lebedev Company came here in the *St. Paul*, and to get rid of them I told them the Cook Inlet was a good breeding-ground for sea-otters. They went there and made trouble for our hunters."

Captain Cook, seeking the mythical passage to China, found in 1778 a great estuary on the northwest coast, and explored the unknown gulf to its limits. It is several hundred miles north of Sitka; and is named for the explorer—Cook Inlet. The entrance to it is the Bay of Kenai, past which Cape Douglas juts out from the Alaskan mainland.

The vessels of the Russian hunters, venturing in Cook's track decades later, had to dare the boiling fury of Alaska's "Hell Gate"—the tide-rips around the Barren Islands, which lift from the channel.

The Indians inhabiting the shores of Cook Inlet were Kenaitze, related to the Indians who roamed the plains and foothills of our Rocky Mountains. Dressed—men and women alike—in deerskin shirts and trousers, ornamented with beads, porcupine-quills brightly stained, and plaited grass, they were the only coast natives that did not depend on fish for their food. These lithe Indians, with their Julius Cæsar noses, hunted the huge brown bear.

It relished deer, but was also an expert salmon fisher, and when the salmon run was over, was adaptable enough to live on small creatures and berries. Pursuing this fierce creature for bedding and door-curtains, the Kenaitze had themselves become brave and strong and fierce—a hard race of Indians which only the terror of gunpowder could subdue.

Fort Alexander, on Cook Inlet, as the Greek had warned, demanded Baranov's immediate attention. The men of that post were meeting unfair competition now from the Lebedev Company, whose fort was fifteen miles away. Vancouver, who visited these forts when he explored Cook Inlet, said that the stations had a stench only exceeded by that of skunks.

The Shelikov and Lebedev groups of hunters at Cook Inlet were getting along amiably enough when two new captains came from the Lebedev Company.

When the veteran Lebedev commander Kolomin saw a ship of his company pass up the inlet, he sent a message of welcome, but the two new leaders, Konovalov and Balushin, when they appeared at his gate, said they had been sent to supersede him and to take over his store of furs.

To surrender an office was one thing, but to give up valuable furs that must be accounted for at Okhotsk was another. Kolomin refused; driving off the newcomers with leveled muskets.

As the claimants were reembarking, canoes filled with Kenaitze came by. At a command given by Balushin, the Cossacks pushed their boats alongside, scattered the Indians with their guns, and with booty of women and peltry went back to their vessel, which they had converted into a shelter for the winter—Fort St. Nicholas.

Beginning with this outrage, they ranged through native villages robbing the men and bringing native girls to their wilderness huts:

Foreseeing that such brutality would cause a native uprising, Kolomin went in December on a hard voyage to Kodiak Island and asked Baranov to drive out the ruffians, but Baranov was unsure of his authority and said that he would send the complaint



to Okhotsk. Disgusted, Kolomin went back and submitted to Konovalov's rule.

When he later visited those waters, Baranov attempted to come to an agreement with the outrageous Konovalov and Balushin, but they mocked him.

Meanwhile, however, Baranov's prestige was at stake, and it was almost lost when, on the inspection tour of the Shelikov posts, he himself was in a territory invaded by Konovalov, and was almost captured by him. Remembering the promises of the commander Johann Koch, he decided to assume an authority he did not have in writing. Pretending to represent the government, he commanded the freebooter to appear before him.

Against the advice of his companions, Konovalov came, expecting to patch things up at Kodiak, but Baranov arrested him and sent him to Okhotsk for trial. From then on Baranov was respected by the hunters employed by rival companies.

At the Kodiak headquarters there was trouble enough. While preparing in spring for a great hunt for the sea-otter, a terrible storm smote the island, smashed canoes, and drowned many natives. The disaster drove the General Manager to move the settlement from the vulnerable Three Saints Bay to Chiniak Bay on the higher side, near the stand of timber.

Before long, he had rallied the Aleuts for the big drive. The power he exerted brought 450 *bidarkas* into his fleet, the inducement to the hunters being so much iron for each skin. The women worked on making watertight the coverings of walrus hide.

Across Shelikov Strait to the shores of the mainland Baranov led the fleet, anchoring in Chugach Gulf, Prince William Sound. It was hard to lead the Aleuts, for they were mild and timid, and the Kolosh inhabiting this coast were fierce warriors, and fought savagely against invaders. In a battle with them, Baranov lost two Russians and ten Aleuts.

The summer's experiences had shown the need of armed ships to bring supplies, facilitate trading, and to convoy the hunters. He was delighted, then, when the Russian ship *Orel* anchored in Three Saints harbor.

Its captain was the Englishman Shields, and with him were five English sailors. The rovers had joined the Czar's forces at Ekaterinburg, and then had accepted the commission of bringing a ship with supplies to the Shelikov station.

Shields was a man after Baranov's own heart. The Englishman liked the hot vodka punch. They became drinking companions, their joviality surviving their drunken blows.

On one score, the General Manager was forced to be severe with the Englishmen. They had brought venereal disease to the island and must submit to a cure: mercurials dissolved in vodka. He laid down the law about their commerce with Aleut women.

They need not expect to find prostitutes—who were forbidden. Pairing off could be done if presents were given to the girl's father. If one wanted to replace a girl who had lived with him, agreement must be made with the parents to take care of the cast-off, with satisfactory compensation.

Shields said that he did not intend to stay and become the father of half-breeds. Having discovered the Englishman's value in navigation and shipbuilding, Baranov insisted that he remain. They fought about it, rolling on the ground and "beating each other like a couple of peasants."

Not because of blows but for rewards, the Englishman agreed to stay. He was promised, for each of his companions, sea-otter skins valued at 2000 roubles each season. He himself was to receive more, with two full shares for two years of all the pelts discovered on new islands.

The General Manager had early begged his employer that a vessel be sent loaded with shipbuilding materials. When those brought by Shields were unloaded, Baranov found them insufficient. He wrote:

"We have only half a keg of tar; three kegs of pitch; not a pound of steel; not one nail, and very little iron."

The building went on, however. He had selected for the shipyard a site—Resurrection Bay—near the present town of Seward, and there the workmen labored under Shields. The timbers were handhewn. The iron was gathered from natives who had obtained it in trade from the Chukchis of northern Kamchatka; spruce-gum and whale-oil were mixed as substitute for tar; tur-

pentine came from pine trees, and paint was made by mixing certain elements with whale-oil. The sails were assembled of pieces and shreds of canvas gathered all along the coast.

Shields, if he knew the classics, could have quoted: "Sheer necessity—the proper parent of an art, and the mother of invention."

To endure hardships; to make shift with what is available—this was the grindstone that sharpened Russian character in Siberia and the Aleutians.

With little ceremony, Baranov floated the first ship launched in the waters of Alaska. She was a three-masted double-decker, 23 feet beam, and 13½ feet deep, and was 180 tons burden. Her name, *Phoenix*, was borrowed from an East Indiaman commanded by a friend, the Irish Captain Moore.

The launching was celebrated by feasting upon the tough sheep that the colony possessed, and by champagne for all. Later, when the *Phoenix* sailed under Shields triumphantly into the port of Okhotsk, there was an enthusiastic reception: a salute with cannon; the ringing of church bells; the celebration of the Te Deum Mass; and many bumpers. The toasts recalled Peter, the ship-building Czar, and his spirit was invoked to inspire further maritime activities in Pacific waters.

As if there were not enough trouble at Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound, there was rebellion to be put down on Kodiak. The exiles who had been shipped to Baranov as mechanics and boatmen were conspiring. He met the opposition head-on.

"The work we do here," he told the revolvers, "is for the glory of the Russian fatherland and the honor of the Russian people. But some of you have seen fit to spoil it with meetings, conspiracies, plots.

"You know, the great Solomon said, 'Any town, state, or family that divides against itself shall fall.' Take a rope. No matter how thick it is, if you divide it into strands, each can be easily broken. However, as long as that rope is whole a hundred men cannot break it. . . .

"At home, what sort of lives did you lead? Did any of you do anything much above herding pigs? Or did any of you have a bench to sit on except in the vodka shops where you spent most

of your time? Here, however, you can become judges and prime ministers in council!

"Now I want nothing from you but a clear statement of any complaints you may have; if I see any means of helping you consistent with the general welfare, I shall do so."

There was the ring of iron in his voice, and the mutineers went back to work.

Apprised by Baranov of his intention to found a colony of hunters and farmers on Yakutat Bay (about 216 miles northwest of the present Juneau), Shelikov sent Baranov this amazing letter of advice:

"It only remains for us to hope that having selected the mainland as a suitable place, you will lay out the settlement with some taste, and with due regard to beauty of construction, in order that when visits are made by foreign ships, as cannot fail to happen, it may appear more like a town than a village, and that the Russians in America may live in a neat and orderly way, and not, as in Okhotsk, in squalor and misery caused by the absence of nearly everything necessary to civilization.

"Use taste as well as practical judgment in locating the settlement. Look to beauty as well as to convenience of materials and supplies. On the plans as well as in reality leave room for spacious squares for public assemblies. Make the streets not too long, but wide, and let them radiate from squares.

"If the site is wooded, let trees enough stand to line the streets and fill the gardens, in order to beautify the place and preserve a healthy atmosphere. . . . Your work will be reviewed and discussed at the imperial court."

Baranov grew sardonic:

"I suppose," he observed, "that our monarch will send favorite architects and city-planners, and a shipload of skilled engineers, planners, and builders—with plenty of provisions to support them. And I suppose that God will change these dismal skies so that the lovely groves and gardens will flourish. Isn't that like Shelikov!—He wrote it for the court to see! No doubt the All-Highest will bestow a medal on him for this grand civic ideal."

## CHAPTER XVI

"CHIEF, I WANT to take your daughter into my house!"

"How much tobacco and rum will you give me for her? And she will want plenty of beads and ribbons!"

"I will pay you what you want."

"Then she is yours."

"Chief, your daughter does not satisfy me."

"You can have another of my daughters for the same price in tobacco and rum. But first you must give the girl you return to me more ribbons and beads."

"I have done so and she is satisfied."

"Maybe some other Russian will buy her from me. There is my other daughter. Go and show her the bright things you will give her and she will be glad to go into your house."

That is the way it was at Kodiak Island and at all of the other Russian outposts. When the restraining influence of Natalya Shelikov departed from the Aleutians, the Russian hunters, hungry for women, turned to the large barracks which housed as hostages two hundred daughters of chiefs of various islands, and chose girls as house-mates for a week, a month, or a day. Out of such pairings came the creole race of the Aleutians and the Alaskan mainland.

A Russian officer who visited Unalaska in 1790 with Captain Billings, wrote:

"On the arrival of a vessel at an inhabited island, the Peredofchik sent an armed boat to the habitations to take from the natives all their furs and valuable articles they possessed; and if the least opposition was made, they were silenced by the muskets of the hunters. Wives were also taken from their husbands, and daughters from their mothers; indeed, the barbarity of their subduers to the Crown of Russia is not to be described."

It was, however, for more than lust that the Russians took to themselves the girls of the island and mainland. These men of Siberia, venturing for the first time into the life of sea-beaten islands, had need of the deft fingers of women in clothing them

with waterproof garments, and in sewing skin sails, and coverings for boats. Except in the cases of the most brutal Cossack raiders, the Russians were kind to the women they mated with, and it was later remarked by English and Yankee skippers that the Russians and the natives got along surprisingly well—because the Slavs took naturally to living on the same plane as the Aleuts and Kolosh. Often family ties wove themselves out of these casual affairs, and one of the chief duties of the coming priests was to gather together a willing Russian, his docile wife, and their several children, and sanctify the mating, and give Christian names to the wife and offspring. Out of these marriages were to come many women of character, and a number of men who became noted explorers and navigators.

Baranov himself was something of a Cossack in his ways with native women. He lived, so to speak, "on the land," with rum, vodka and native girls to take his mind off the misery of fog, vice, and misfortune.

While he kept his changing harem of island girls, he was alert to the stories of his hunters that there were more comely women in the tents of the Kolosh on the mainland, and in the end he affronted the Aleut women by bringing a Kolosh princess from Alaska to become the ruling woman in his house.

On one of his expeditions to Alaska he had repelled a tribe which was on the way to attack Chief Storyteller, and the grateful Kenaitze chieftain bade one of his daughters to appear before him.

Clad in white deerskin exquisitely beaded, the girl was tall, supple, and beautiful in the Indian fashion and very pleasing to Baranov, who felt that the short and thick-bodied Aleut women could be improved upon.

The Kenaitze princess held her head proudly. Her high cheekbones gave her cheeks a comely slant, and she had glowing eyes, a well-shaped nose, and splendid teeth. She was as voluptuous as Solomon's Shulamite.

For all her royalty, she succumbed at once to the enticement of trinkets and ribbons, and when the middle-aged lover set out to return to Kodiak Island she went with him very willingly.

Seeing how many of the children were half-caste, and how few were the marriage ceremonies, the General Manager decided to do something about it. After all, Kodiak Island had been reported in statements to the court to be an enlightened community, and it would seem wise that Shelikov, boaster about religious purposes, should send at least one priest.

Yes, Baranov reasoned, one missionary would be enough for this group of islands. He himself had been taught when a boy by one priest who covered a lot of ground. If there were just one priest on Kodiak, he would be so busy with the women and children that he would not have time to bother with the affairs of the Company, or to object to the barracks filled with young women—which an ascetic might term a brothel.

"Send me a priest," he wrote to Shelikov. "Choose one that is intelligent, easy to get along with, not bigoted, and above all, sincere."

When later, as we have suggested, the boat from Okhotsk brought him a dozen priests under Archimandrite Yussuf, he raged, for all that he could think of was that they were a flock of ravens come to peck at the Company's empty bins.

"I present you," Shelikov had unctuously written to him (with the court in mind), "with some guests who have been selected by the court to spread the word of God in America. I know you will feel as great a satisfaction as I do that the country where I labored before you and where you labor now for the glory of our country receives them. We see in these guests a hopeful prophecy for future prosperity."

The winter was coming on, and food would be scarce, and no extra supply of provisions had been sent to sustain the clergy.

"When they pray 'Give us this day our daily bread,'" Baranov said to himself, "they must be ready to go out and dig it out of the shore or fish it out of the sea."

It was indeed a God-forsaken place the clergymen had come to, and it is no wonder that they sent letters of bitter complaint back to the Holy Synod to be transmitted to the Crown. They had sailed into the devil's caldron when they came to these volcanic Aleutians. The warm Japan current in conflict with the icy waters of Bering Sea caused almost constant fog, and the bleak

wet winds penetrated through wraps and chilled the very marrow.

The short, swarthy Aleuts, their new disciples, could teach them wisdom about the climate, but could they ever have the fortitude to accept the philosophy? "Do not speak of the wind," the old people said; "if you do, you will bring more wind." And again, when the cold wind blew steadily, they would say, "A wind is not a river; sometime it will stop!"

But to the missionaries, the cutting wind seemed never to stop.

Out of his own income Baranov contributed 1500 roubles that the missionaries could build a church, but they complained that he delayed the work, and that he sat in his house hatching mischief against them. To Father Juvenal, for instance, Baranov was a son of Satan.

In the Bancroft Library, California, there is the manuscript of the journal of poor Father Juvenal. It pictures Baranov bitterly. The diary also illuminates the polygamous practices of the Indians, the unmorality of the women, and the sufferings of a rigid celibate.

The General Manager had forced the priests to provide their food by labor in the fields or the trades, and to this decree Juvenal submitted without resentment. His diary reveals that he welcomed rather than resented the work of earning his own food.

"When school was closed," he wrote, "I went up the river with my boys, and with the help of God we caught 103 salmon of large size, which some of the women assisted us in cutting up and drying."

The work, however, was disheartening, for Baranov set a poor example. Describing a service held at Three Saints, Father Juvenal wrote:

"We had a very solemn and impressive service this morning. Mr. Baranov and officers and sailors from the ship attended, and also a large number of natives.

"We had fine singing, and a congregation with great outward appearance of devotion. I could not help but marvel at Alexander Andrevich [Baranov], who stood there and listened and crossed himself, gave the responses at the proper time, and joined in the singing with the same hoarse voice with which he was shouting



obscene songs the night before, when I saw him in the midst of a drunken carousal with a woman seated in his lap. I dispensed with services in the afternoon, because the traders were drunk again, and might have disturbed us and disgusted the natives."

And then the Father found it hard to overcome the influence the tribal medicine-men exercised over the Aleutians. Natives of a certain island, for instance, asked him if he could cure a man when he was very sick.

"With the help of God I might," Father Juvenal replied.

They shrugged their shoulders at this and one man said:

"We have a shaman who once brought a dead man back to life; and he did it all alone."

The conflict between priest and Manager becomes vivid in Father Juvenal's account of a voyage from port to port on the brig *Catherine*, in company with Baranov and his traders.

Baranov and his party took the cabin, and Father Juvenal was guided to a small space in the dark, smelly hold between bales of goods and piles of dried fish. There by the uncertain light of a lantern, the missionary, while disturbed by the obscene songs of the party in the cabin, continued his diary.

On the second day of the voyage, the vessel was jamming a strong headwind and the sea had become heavy and choppy.

"Send for the priest," cried Baranov.

The meek Father appeared.

"Have you blessed the ship, Father Juvenal?"

"I have done so."

"Then, by God, light a taper before yonder image!"

Without a word, the priest did so and withdrew to his hole.

He could hear the rum-hoarsened voice of the General Manager addressing the passengers and sailors:

"We have a second Jonah on board, and there are plenty of whales about!"

And yet, when the second Jonah went ashore to pursue his mission, Baranov cooperated by giving him passage in his fleet of *bidarkas* to St. George on the Gulf of Kenai. A rival company had a station there, and Baranov threw after Juvenal the comforting assertion:

"You'll find the traders there little better than robbers and murderers!"

It pleased Father Juvenal to set down later in his diary that he found at this station the first signs of religious observance by *promyshleniki* during his far travels. This is a veiled condemnation of Baranov's conduct of his trading-posts.

The priest had the satisfaction of baptizing a number of adults and natives, and of marrying several couples. It pleased him, when he held divine services, that trader Stepan Laduigiun was willing to read the prayers, and that other Christian traders led in the singing.

It was well that he had such spiritual satisfaction, for a bad time was coming.

Setting out on a long voyage northward to visit the tribe of Ilyamnas, Juvenal came to a village of this tribe whose chief was Shakmut. He took with him a boy interpreter, Nikita. Hospitably, the chief invited the Father to live in his own house, and was amazed later when Juvenal asked for a separate residence. When a house was built for him the priest confessed to his diary:

"It was a relief to get away from the crowded house of the chief, where persons of all ages and sexes mingle without regard to decency and morals. To my utter astonishment, Shakmut asked me last night to share the couch of one of his wives. He has three or four. I suppose such abomination is the custom of the country, and he intended no insult. God gave me grace to overcome my indignation, and decline the offer in a friendly and dignified manner. My first duty, when I have somewhat mastered the language, shall be to preach against such wicked practices, but I could not touch upon such subjects through a boy interpreter."

Apparently curious as to the power he would receive through baptism, Shakmut decided to become a Christian. Juvenal recorded with joy:

"The great step which is to lay the foundation for future success in my labors has been taken. The chief of the Ilyamnas has been baptized, with two of his slaves and one of his wives. The latter came forward at the last moment, but I dared not refuse her, for fear of stopping the whole ceremony. Shakmut was

gorgeously arrayed in deerskin robes nearly covered with costly beads. . . . I gave the name Alexander to the chief, telling him that it was the name of His Majesty, the Emperor, at which he seemed flattered."

With the conversion of the chief, Juvenal felt that the time was propitious to preach against the custom of plural wives, but this preaching was resented by Shakmut and his brothers. To destroy the priest's influence with the people, they chose a temptress.

Father Juvenal's journal gives a pathetically frank account of his temptation and fall:

"With a trembling hand I write the sad occurrences of the past day and night. Much rather I would leave the disgraceful story untold, but I must overcome my own shame and mortification, and write it down as a warning to other missionaries who may come after me. Last night I retired at my usual hour, after prayers with the boys who sleep in another room.

"In the middle of the night I woke to find myself in the arms of a woman whose fiery embraces excited me to such an extent that I felt a victim to lust, and a grievous sin was committed before I could extricate myself. As soon as I could regain my senses I drove the woman out, but I felt too guilty to be very harsh with her. What a terrible blow this to my recent hopes! How can I hold my head up among the people, who, of course, will hear of this affair? . . . God is my witness that I have set down the truth here in the face of anything that may be said about it hereafter. I have kept myself secluded today from everybody. I have not yet strength enough to face the world."

The next day as the Father tried to protect himself against a return of the lascivious one, this incident occurred:

"When I was making a wooden bolt for the door of my sleeping-room, a woman looked in and laughed right in my face. She may be the one who caused my fall, for it was dark, and I never saw her countenance."

The next day he wrote:

"My disgrace has become public already, and I am laughed at wherever I go, especially by the women. Of course, they do not understand the sin, but rather look upon it as a good joke. It will require great firmness on my part to regain what respect I have

lost for myself as well as on behalf of the church. I have vowed to burn no fuel in my bedroom the whole winter, in order to chastise my body—a mild punishment, indeed, compared to the blackness of my sin.”

On the next Sabbath, Katlewah, the brother of Shakmut, came with three wives and seven children to be baptized, but while the priest was forced to bless the polygamous family, he vowed to himself to make the chief relinquish all but one wife. That evening, seeing Shakmut and his several wives carousing together, Juvenal's fury burst out, and through the boy Nikita, he told the chief that he must conform to the rules of the church, and have only one wife.

It was a fatal declaration, but one feels that the priest's remorse was so keen that he was willing to give up his life in expiation for his sin.

On the next day, his martyrdom came.

“The chief and his brother have both been here this morning and abused me shamefully. Their language I could not understand, but they spat in my face, and what was worse, upon the sacred images on the walls. Katlewah seized my vestments and carried them off, and I was left bleeding from a blow struck with an ivory club by the chief. Nikita has bandaged and washed my wounds; but from his anxious manner I can see that I am still in danger. The other boys have run away. My wound pains me so that I can scarcely . . .”

The diary ends here. Shakmut, the chief he had baptized Alexander, came back with his brother and stabbed the missionary to the heart. He made no attempt at flight or self-defense.

The boy interpreter Nikita took up the manuscript journal and later gave it to Father Veniaminov, the eloquent missionary who later became the Bishop of Moscow. Father Veniaminov, after talking with the natives of the region, gave this as a further reason for the slaying of Juvenal: the chiefs had given him their children to be educated at Kodiak, and when they wanted them back and failed to recover them, killed him as a deceiver.

## CHAPTER XVII

### The Spirit of the Russian Hunter (*Baranov's Own Song*)

The will of the hunters, the spirit of trade  
On the far shores a new Muscovy made,  
In bleakness and hardship finding new wealth  
For Fatherland and Czardom.

Sukharev's towers old Moscow adorn,  
The bells ring at evening, the guns boom at morn,  
But far-off's the glory of Ivan the Great—  
We have naught but our own bravery!

IT WAS A man of Erin who first told the General Manager of the advantages of Sitka as a site for a trading-post.

While Baranov was visiting the Shelikov station on Prince William Sound, he had found the East Indian ship *Phoenix* in the track of his cutter, and hailed her.

An Irish voice bade him come aboard.

The invitation came from Captain Moore, but after the greeting the two commanders found it easier to converse in bad German. The Irishman generously revealed that there was a nest of islands down on the southeast coast, and that one of them, Sitka, would be a fine station for the Russians.

"Sea-otters are as thick as rats there," he confided.

As the months went by, Baranov heard more and more about Sitka. The Aleuts told him that Englishmen and American skip-pers gathered there: Fearing that if he did not act soon, the new rich hunting-grounds would be closed to his Company, he gathered a fleet of 500 *bidarkas* manned by 1000 Aleuts, and began the voyage. At Yakutat, his dependable lieutenant Kuskov joined him with a flotilla assembled on that coast.

On July 18, 1799, Baranov sighted Mount Edgecumbe, the extinct volcano which marks Sitka Sound. He saw at once that the most desirable site was the hill on which the village of the Sitkan tribe was located, but his surveyors had recommended a harbor several miles away. Observing that the native fort at the desired

place was formidable, he agreed that it was not the time to fight for possession of the hill of totem-poles.

Formidable men were these Sitkans of the Kolosh tribe. They were over six feet tall, lithe and well proportioned. Their kinship with the Indians of the American plains showed in the high cones of their skulls, which were surmounted by black and yellow feathers. They had shells in their ears, and wore mantles of fur. Baranov noted that several of them carried guns and powder-horns.

Their head chief, Skaoushleut, who had had dealings with Russian, English, and American captains, kept his warriors well controlled, and waited the word of the interpreter as to what the white chief wanted.

Baranov informed him that they had come there only for trade; that they would help the Sitkans against aggressors, and stop practices of English and American sea-captains injurious to the natives. For beads, metals, trinkets, and liquor, the Sitkans sold the beachhead.

The fort—St. Michael—was built, and the flag was raised with Ivan Kuskov saying prayers. Then came the first skirmish with the Sitkans. Having taken a liking to the interpreter, Richard, they kept him in their midst. To recover him, stout-hearted Baranov led his men up the hill, passed down a row of totem-poles, and seized two natives as hostages for the one. The daunted chief then surrendered Richard.

While the stockade was being erected, a quarrel occurred among the Russians—a bitter exchange illustrating the feud between the aristocratic youngsters of the navy and the man unadorned by gold braid.

Requested by Baranov to perform a service, Lieutenant Talin of the *Orel* refused to take orders from him.

"I'll hang him to the yardarm," he swore, "if he comes aboard this ship!"

By messenger went Baranov's retort:

"I suppose I have to explain to you why I, a trader without rank or noble descent, manage all the matters of the Company here as well as give orders regarding navigation. I enclose for your in-

formation Secret Orders 18 and 19 from the commander at Okhotsk."

It would have been more profitable for the Company if the General Manager had not tried to employ the high-and-mighty Talin, for when the latter sailed to transport furs his vessel went on the rocks, and he lost five men and a valuable cargo of pelts.

Captain Cleveland, of the Yankee ship *Caroline*, came into Sitka harbor. He had aboard a large stock of English broadcloth, and a big quantity of arms, ammunition, and rum.

Enjoying the rum in the cabin of the *Caroline*, Baranov told Cleveland that they expected trouble with the natives, and hoped that the American ships would not give them firearms in exchange for their furs.

Cleveland replied, "I have brought this ship ten thousand miles to get fur, and I'll trade any kind of goods to obtain it."

There were similar meetings—and drinking parties—with Captain Bowers of the ship *Jenny*; Captain Davidson of the *Rover*; and with Dodd of the *Alexander*, Swift of the *Hazard*, and Bowles of the *Alert*. The Kolosh, having named the English skippers "George's men," after the monarch, called the New Englanders "Boston men."

Amazed at the excellent trade goods and good provisions aboard the American vessels, the General Manager decided that, since his Company had not provided ships, his salvation lay in trading with them. There was common ground between the Russians and the Yankees because London's great companies had impoverished the coast of New England, and the dukes and merchants of St. Petersburg were draining Siberia.

But when Baranov asked the Americans to stop selling firearms to the natives, they answered as Cleveland had replied. They said they would even sell cannon for a fine pile of sea-otter skins.

In choosing to work with the Yankees, Baranov infuriated the Company's directors, for it was secretly understood with the government that the Company was to oppose the trading of Englishmen and Americans.

What had brought the ships of New England up into Alaskan

waters, when to the rest of the young Republic those fog-blanketed waters were unknown?

The principal quest of the Yankee skippers was for sea-otter furs to sell in the Canton market.

With a cargo of furs gathered in the grim Northwest, the Boston men sailed for Hawaii, and then took a route that passed between Luzon and Formosa, and, daring the swarming junks of the Chinese pirates, came into the river leading up to Canton.

Anchoring twelve miles downstream because of the shallowness of the river, the skippers gave the customary gifts, paid duty, and rented storage space for their furs in the warehouses of the merchants who controlled the foreign trade.

The great warehouses rising from the shore shut out the sight of the ancient city, but to entice the sailors, gaudy flower-boats lay along the beaches, from which the voices and music of Chinese sirens enticed foreign men.

In the evening, when paper lanterns lighted up the houseboats and the flower-boats, how thrillingly exotic the harbor was to sailors used to the severe coasts of New England and to the depressing shores of the North Pacific.

The pioneer Boston ship in the Canton trade was the *Columbia*, Captain Robert Gray. Excited by reports of the fortunes that had been made by the crews of Captain Cook's ships when they sold their stores of sea-otter pelts in the Chinese market, Boston merchants became busy, and Gray was their first trading adventurer. Three years later he was back, a wildly-cheered circumnavigator, and Boston was in the fur business from then on.

It stung the Yankees, however, that New Yorkers had beaten them to Canton. The first sight the Chinese had of the American ensign was when they saw it flying above Manhattan's *Empress of China*.

It was not only the shrewd heads of the East India Company and the Hudson's Bay Company that were trading in Russian-American waters. There was the pushing American John Jacob Astor, who had recently founded a trading-post at the mouth of the Columbia, and had sent Captain Ebbets in the *Enterprise* to trade with Baranov. Inspector Golovnin, who was at Sitka then, suspected the American came to find out the lay of the land so



that the young United States could plan to push the Russians back out of America.

Fears like these did not retard the earner-of-dividends Baranov. He at once made an arrangement with Astor which led to mutually profitable trading with Canton, and later the encouraged Astor sent his confidential man, Wilson B. Hunt, to strengthen the relations between his fur company and the Russian one, with the obvious intent of squeezing the Hudson's Bay Company in British Columbia.

Hunt was a straight-laced fellow, and was shocked to find that the ruler of New Archangel expected to do business over a rum pot. While he managed to do some trading with Baranov, he failed in his main objective, and complained that boiling punch as strong as sulphur had been forced upon him, and that he had been grossly insulted at the General Manager's table.

But Captain O'Keen (or O'Kain) of the *Eclipse*, made no such complaints. This coasting skipper sang, drank and reveled with Baranov until far into the morning, and the next day swapped valuable information about the sea-otter market, and made deals that meant profits for both. It was after one of these wild parties that Baranov and O'Keen agreed to hunt for sea-otters down into the Spaniards' country. A new scheme was evolved. Baranov's Aleut hunters, with their boats, were to be transported by the *Eclipse* to the hunting shores.

A catch of 2200 otter-skins rewarded this first venture. The founding of Fort Ross in California was foreshadowed.

Three years after the founding of the post at Sitka, the Indians uprose. The Russian traders were mistaken in thinking that these proud natives would be docile under the seizure of their women as hostages and concubines. The other tribes of the coast, still undominated, were mocking the Sitkans:

"You are slaves to the Russians—you give up your women to them!"

These totemic tribes around Sitka were the most formidable foes the Russians had come up against.

To fight them in their forests required a technique the Russians had not mastered. A commander could not drive them up a bare

hill and slaughter them with two-pounders as Shelikov had done, for when they were pursued up the streams there were coverts everywhere that could be turned into ambuscades.

It was a lazy day at the fort. June was the time for outdoor enjoyment, and parties of men had gone forth to fish and trap. Some of the women of the Russians had taken the children to hunt berries. Other women—Kolosh—had stolen into the woods to signal to the 'Indians that the fort was almost deserted.

There were in the fort just twenty-nine Russians and two hundred undependable Aleuts, and some creole women. They were variously occupied in the two-story barracks building, and the blockhouses and cannon were neglected.

Out of the forest darted painted savages with guns and spears. Out from behind a little cape in the bay came a fleet of war canoes. The old chief Skaoushleut and the young chief Katlean suddenly appeared on the knoll close by and began directing the onslaught.

Sentry Lebedev fell on a spear and was impaled.

Though the Russians defended themselves with muskets and small cannon, the swarming Sitkans, with brands of burning pitch, soon set fire to the stockade. Terrified women, crowded into a part of the barracks that give way while burning, fell into the hands of the savages and were carried off in the canoes. Babies were knocked on the head and thrown into the water.

Of the men in the fort few escaped, and those that were captured were fiendishly tortured by the tribal shaman, whose weapons were sharp clam-shells. Leader Erlevski had his fingernails torn out and circles of skin cut out of the skin of his knees. Kochessov, half-Aleut, died under the torture.

Medvyednikov, commander of the fort, was away on a hunting trip with Tumakov and Shashin. They were surprised and slain.

Commander Ebbets, Astor's skipper, had his ship in the harbor, and rescued some of the prisoners, as did the Boston vessel *Alert* and the English ship *Unicorn*. Its Captain Barber, coming among the enemy's canoes when they were being loaded with the plunder of 2700 otter-skins stored in the fort, took the peltry. With the survivors of the massacre—three Russians, five Aleuts,

and eighteen women and children—the *Unicorn* sailed to Kodiak, and brought to Baranov the first news of the dreadful disaster.

Barber's supposed mission of mercy took on another color when he demanded 50,000 roubles for his work. The distressed director settled with the extortioner for 10,000.

Attacks were to have been made at once on all Russian stations along the coast, but the vigilance and bravery of Kuskov, commander at Yakutsk, frustrated the attacks.

The rage of Baranov at the fall of the Sitka fort is revealed in a letter he wrote some time later, when the Czar honored him:

"I am now a nobleman, but Sitka is destroyed. I cannot live under the burden, so I am going forth either to restore the possessions of my august benefactor, or to die in the attempt."

In the summer of 1804, the determined leader recaptured Sitka harbor and founded an enduring station. The hill he had first coveted fell into his hands and became the site of the fortress.

Prepared for a desperate battle, he was favored by fortune, for the Russian warship *Neva* was in the harbor when his armada arrived. The two new war vessels Czar Alexander had sent forth to circumnavigate the globe, the *Nadesha* with Captain Krusenstern, and the *Neva* with Captain Lisianski, had separated, and Lisianski had brought his ship to Kodiak after Baranov had set out for Sitka. Lisianski was weary after his long cruise, and hoped for a rest, but he followed Baranov and arrived before the flotilla.

The main fortress of the Sitkans was not on what is now called Castle Hill, or Baranov Hill. It was close by, near the mouth of Indian River, and was an irregular square whose walls were made of timber so thickly planted that the guns of the *Neva* could not demolish them.

Towing the *Neva* through the shallow waters, the *bidarkas* came to the hill upon which was the native village, and took possession of the beach. Leading one hundred and fifty men with field-pieces, Baranov attacked the main fort at Indian River, and was repulsed with the loss of ten men. Twenty-six were wounded.

Then the ships came closer and began a bombardment, and

under the gunfire the Sitkans hoisted a white flag. When the parley was held on the hill, Baranov demanded the release of all Aleut captives, and the evacuation of the village on the summit. The chiefs protested that it was the home of their fathers, and that their totems stood there.

"Leave the hill," Baranov ordered, "and get out of the fort on the sound!"

The Sitkans returned to the fort and stayed three days, but the cannon conquered them in the end.

Abandoning the fort by night, they retreated over the mountains. When the Russians entered, they found the bodies of thirty natives who had been killed in the battle, and with these were the bodies of five children who appeared to have been killed to prevent outcries during the retreat.

The new settlement was quickly built with the heavy timber the abundant forest provided. For the dedication ceremonies Baranov, his emotions breaking through his crust, wrote the ode we have quoted. Sung at this dedication, it became a part of the ceremonies whenever a station was built in Russian America.

While Baranov feared the Indians, seafaring men looked with suspicion on the miserable men he employed in guarding his fort. The fact that many of them were convicts made visitors uneasy.

The most realistic picture we can give of this fear on the part of mariners, is Captain Golovnin's dramatic account of his entrance at night in the *Diana*:

"It was 10 P.M., and dark. We fired a gun to call the pilot; lights were hung out, and we lay at anchor until midnight; we could hear the noise of oars, but it was too dark to see the boat.

"At last Russian voices became audible, and we could doubt no longer that some of the Company's *promyshleniki* were approaching, but for all that we did not neglect any precautionary measures. It was well known to me that this class of the Company's servants consisted chiefly of criminals; and also that the class of scoundrels, having come from exile under false promises and expectations, found life in America even worse than that of a Siberian convict, and therefore were always ready to profit by any opportunity to throw off the yoke of the Russian-American

Company. They would not have hesitated even to surprise a ship of war, and take possession of the country.

"All arms were kept at hand, and the crew on the alert. I then hailed the boat. They stated in reply that they were sixteen unarmed men, who had been sent by the Chief Manager to our assistance. I ordered them aboard, and while they were standing in line I questioned them, the answers being evidently given in fear. During this time the officers of the *Diana* stood motionless at their posts. Not a voice was heard but my own and that of the spokesman.

"They had never witnessed such discipline before, and, as I subsequently heard, were laboring under the belief that they had been captured by some European man-of-war, on which I alone could speak Russian. But as soon as I had learned all I cared to know, I told them that they might talk to their countrymen, and when they heard the Russian language spoken on all sides, they were almost beside themselves with joy. Only then they confessed that they had come armed with pistols, spears, and guns, which, suspecting us to be English, they had concealed in the bottom of their boat."

With the reestablishing of New Archangel at Sitka, the General Manager was at the tip of his career. The Emperor had announced:

"Know ye all, we do confer upon said Alexander Andrevich the rank in Civil Service of Collegiate Councilor."

His satisfaction at the unexpected honor showed in his reply:

"Born of a humble merchant family and limited to nature alone for my education without any of the scientific training men of standing and character know, I never flattered myself I would receive the distinction Your Imperial Majesty has bestowed on me. . . ."

## REZANOV CASTS A NET AT THE SUN

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### CHAPTER XVIII

THE RUSSIAN PLAN to build a sea empire in the North and South Pacific was evolving. Okhotsk had been established as a naval base; New Archangel had been settled at Sitka; stations in Oregon, California and in the Sandwich Islands must be established to complete the new Russian dominions.

Barred by treaty from the shorter and easier route of the Amur, these stations in American and Hawaiian waters would serve the Russian admiralty as stopping-places on the sea-way to China and Japan. The opulent Oriental market was always Russia's final goal. Great Britain had her India—Russia must have her China. Occupying the best fur regions, Russia would never be satisfied until the old treaty had been destroyed which limited her transportation of furs by a difficult land route to Maitmatsun on the border.

Fresh from his travels in Siberia, High Chamberlain Rezanov became a zealot for naval expansion. It was intolerable that the free-sailing English could go by water with cargoes of furs obtained at Nootka Sound—furs probably taken from Russian

waters—and sail with them to Canton, and there glut the market, while Russia herself could only compete by caravans going at a tortoise pace to the Chinese border.

If Russia did not move quickly, he decided, the British would soon control China as she did India. They were even then making bolder encroachments on the southern coasts of Alaska, and their King George's Sound Company, under license from the South Sea Company and the East India Company, had sent Captains Portlock and Dixon to establish trading-posts there and build factories. Due to small crews and the fierce resistance of the native tribes, the building had been postponed. While the British companies were marking time, Russia should act.

Thus agitated, Rezanov was happy to have the enthusiastic support of Lieutenant Adam Krusenstern, an Estonian in the Russian navy, who had served in the British navy when it was at war with the American colonies, and was familiar with the Pacific Ocean. The assured Krusenstern came forth with a proposal that Russia send furs directly by water to Canton from the post at Kodiak.

Rezanov kindled Alexander, whose ambitions as to the East were so similar to Peter's. Yes, it would be well to make use of the English experience of Lieutenant Krusenstern and his friend Lieutenant Urey Lisianski. Two big ships would be built at Kronstadt, the island fortress in the Gulf of Finland. They would impress the powers of the world by visiting important harbors, and then one would visit the Russian colonies, and the other would go to Canton, and would visit Nagasaki to persuade those hermit-crabs, the Japanese, to open their ports to trade.

And who should be the ambassador who would voyage on one of these ships? Who but Rezanov?

The ships were launched—the *Neva* and the *Nadesha* (Hope).

Watching the stowing of the cargo on his ship *Nadesha*, Krusenstern saw with disgust that it was chiefly composed of elaborate gifts for the Emperors of China and Japan, and books and paintings for the enlightenment of the primitive colonies in the fog.

We were watching the beginning of the modern Russian navy—the fleet with world ambitions but no satisfactory seaports. Later, after the circumnavigating cruise of Krusenstern and Lisianski, Count Rumiantsov was to catch the contagion, and build

and fit out the 180-ton *Rurik*. Having faith in youth, he would choose as its commander the 28-year-old Otto von Kotzebue, whose father was a noted German dramatist. The young captain and his thirty-two officers and men were scientists, artists, and writers, idealistic argonauts who scorned the pursuit of furs, and sought to bring their rulers and people knowledge of the places, tribes, plants and wild creatures of the universe. Kotzebue's narrative of the voyage was to become a widely translated treasure of romantic Russian travel.

In August, 1803, with the blessing of His Majesty, plenipotentiary Rezanov sailed. Casting anchor before Nagasaki, a banquet of celebration was held aboard and toasts were drunk to the future peaceful trade relations between Russia and Japan. Medals celebrating the anniversary of the coronation of Alexander I were distributed by the ambassador to the officers and scientists aboard, and a salute was fired. But, unfortunately, the joy was confined to the vessel, and the silence of the Japanese following the thunder of the cannon was ominous.

Little boats came out with harbor officials and asked questions. Then the little boats came back with higher officials and asked more questions. And so it went on. The Dutch interpreters were very cordial, but they appeared to be having fun too. The Dutch officials and skippers who came aboard to pay their respects were friendly; but they said, licking their lips, that they feared the Russian mission of good will would get no response.

After a five months' wait, Rezanov was visited by the Shogun, personal representative of the Emperor. Some days afterward, the ambassador received an official document; by it he was informed that the Japanese had once admitted ships from all nations, but it had been found to be against the interests of Japan to continue this policy. Christians had come and made trouble with the Buddhists. The Dutch, however, had agreed to trade with Japan without bringing in Christians. All Japan needed was one foreign nation to trade with; therefore all nations except the Dutch were forbidden to enter Japanese waters. So sorry!

As to the many costly gifts, Japan was poor, and it would be wrong for the Emperor to give the customary costly gifts in re-



turn, and the Shogun would be pleased if the Russian visitor would relieve the Emperor of embarrassment and take his gifts away with him.

Rezanov left in a fury. His glamorous mission had failed. He wrote to the Emperor that Japan had insulted the empire, and asked his forgiveness if next year he destroyed the Japanese settlement at Matsai, and drove them off Saghalin Island, and bombarded them out of the Kuriles, and took some of them prisoners for work in the Russian-American colonies.

He who had gone out to spread good will had begun to sow dragons' teeth.

The letters awaiting Rezanov at Petropavlosk, Kamchatka, increased his misery. Mother-in-law Natalya informed him that the profits of the new Russian-American Company had fallen off. Rivals in the trade were accusing General Manager Baranov of a reckless slaughter of fur-bearing animals; of cruelty to the islanders. They were saying that the grand new high-minded Company was making conditions worse. There were reports that the reckless Baranov, in trying to found a station at Sitka, had suffered dreadful losses.

These things did not greatly trouble Rezanov. To get along in the Aleutians, and on the mainland, he said to himself, one should employ a devil rather than an angel. It was the problem of opening sources of food supplies for the colonies that chiefly bothered him. How could they hope for settlers to come when the year-round diet was fish?

One good solution would be to get control of the handy and strategic Hawaiian Islands. He had stopped there before going to Japan. If tropical fruits could be brought from Honolulu to Sitka and Kodiak, what a pleasant relief to the food scarcity that would be! Imagine luscious pineapples bristling in the center of the table above the monotonous salmon!

For the new Russian navy Rezanov had advocated, Hawaii would be badly needed as a port of call. The islands should be the farthestmost southern station of Russia in the Pacific. If he could inspire Baranov to found outposts in California and Hawaii, he could report to the Emperor that progress had been made

and thus the disgrace of his failure at Nagasaki would be wiped out.

Wishing that he was back in St. Petersburg, Rezanov yet set out to visit the colonies. He had been ill on the voyage to Japan, and he shivered as he thought of spending months in the fogs. However, thanks to the young American skipper, John de Wolfe, who had brought his Bristol ship *Juno* to Sitka for traffic in furs, the High Chamberlain's stay at New Archangel was much livelier than he had anticipated. De Wolfe was an exuberant, merry fellow, and dispelled gloom.

The *Juno* had entered the harbor of Sitka some weeks before Rezanov arrived. Writing his recollections many years after, when he was back in Bristol and affectionally called "Nor'west John" by his neighbors, De Wolfe gave a vivid picture of conditions at Sitka at that time, when Baranov was sixty-five. He disclosed why it was easy for the General Manager to communicate with the English and American visitors: he had in his employ an American, Abraham Jones, who served as go-between and interpreter. As the *Juno* anchored, according to de Wolfe:

"Mr. Abraham Jones, an American in the Russian services, immediately came on board, with the Governor's compliments, and kind offers of protection from the Kolosh besieging the vessel, and any aid we might need which it was in his power to give. Accompanied by Mr. Moorfield, I accepted an invitation to go ashore and was received with every mark of friendship and hospitality."

The large room in which the General Manager lived and entertained was far removed from the barbaric atmosphere de Wolfe had been led to expect. An artistic instinct had worked itself out in the furnishings. A person standing amidst the heavy carved tables and chairs and matching decorations, and taking in the handsome bindings in the book cabinets, could imagine that he was a visitor in a mansion of Old Russia.

Seeing that those oil paintings of the celebrities of the empire, heavily framed in gold, attracted de Wolfe, Baranov lifted his mug and drank to them sardonically:

"They were sent to me, along with the books, for the edification

of the Kolosh and Aleut chiefs when they come here to beg me for something."

Resuming de Wolfe's account of the entertainment:

"... The Governor possessed a strong mind, easy manners and deportment, and was apparently well fitted for the place he filled. He commanded the greatest respect from the Indians, who regarded him with mingled feelings of love and fear.

"After exchanging the usual compliments, we were ushered into an apartment where we found a table spread with all the luxuries the place afforded. While we regaled ourselves with a sumptuous fare, the conversation turned to the subject of my cargo. The Governor appeared willing and desirous to exchange furs on fair terms for such articles as they needed. We returned on board in the evening well pleased with our reception, I might say agreeably disappointed, as I had been led to believe by various reports that we should find the Russians little advanced from the savage state."

While de Wolfe was preparing the *Juno* to go down the California coast High Chamberlain Rezanov arrived, and the young man from Bristol was delighted to be caught up into one of those Russian festivals which celebrate any extraordinary occasion. "Several days were spent in festivity and mirth, and business was entirely suspended."

Having found de Wolfe to be a kindred spirit, Baranov took him to his heart, and one of the most delightful accounts of cordial Russian-American relations is found in de Wolfe's narrative of how they livened the winter months:

"January brought cold but not severe weather. . . . The Russians build their log houses in a very substantial manner, of heavy timber, and stop the cracks perfectly tight with moss. Some of them were very large, accommodating after a fashion fifty or sixty persons.

"Several such were completed about this time, and it occurred to us that they were well calculated for ballrooms, and that we could pass away the tedious hours of night dancing. We made out bravely in cotillions and contra-dances, but were rather deficient in female partners. Many of the under-officers had their wives with them, and we picked out some Kodiak women who

were accustomed to Russian dances, and learned the figures easily. When dressed in their finery they appeared quite respectably.

"His Excellency the Plenipotentiary [Rezanov] was always with us on these occasions, and would upon an emergency take the fiddle, on which he was quite a good performer. Dr. Langsdorff and my man Parker took turns at the bow, *and with plenty of good resin* for the stomach as well as the bow, we made a 'gay season' of it."

While de Wolfe was putting this happy scene into his memory, Rezanov was writing home describing the dreadful side of the Sitka nights:

"The great brutality of the Americans [Kolosh] has taught us extreme caution. Our guns are always loaded, everywhere are sentinels with loaded guns, and in the rooms of each of us are weapons which constitute the larger part of the furniture. All night, from the coming of dark, signals are with war discipline and we every minute are ready to receive our dear guests, who profit by the darkness of night and the rainy weather to make their attack."

Planning his spying journey to California, Rezanov offered to buy the *Juno* from de Wolfe; and the Bristol skipper, having already sent home by the New England ship *Mary* 1000 sea-otter skins, accepted the Company's offer and sold his ship and cargo for \$68,000. She was a full-rigged ship of 250 tons, and had a battery of eight guns and a good equipment of small arms, but her hull had been damaged and repaired, and her skipper was satisfied that her owners would be pleased with the transaction.

Because the High Chamberlain desired an all-Russian crew, it was arranged that de Wolfe should stay on as Baranov's guest until the *Juno* returned.

The Kolosh had taken a fancy to him. One of his remarks is significant as to the Russian reign of terror:

"They brought in excellent fresh halibut which they exchanged for fish-hooks and old clothes. To me especially they were very friendly, and came often to my lodgings, seeming to know that I was not one of the Russians."

Spring came, and our American found a new diversion. Sitka had never had a garden: he would originate one.

"The mild weather melted the snow very fast, and by the last of May the frost was out of the ground. Governor Baranov was desirous of having a good kitchen-garden, and so, to commence the business with a sort of flourish, we made up a pretty substantial picnic party. A little way back from shore we found a considerable clearing without underbrush, and here we staked out about two acres of land.

"It was good soil, deep and rich, and we all tried our hands at the spade. The Governor setting the example, we went to work with a good will. Soon getting tired, we adjourned for refreshments, at which it was thought we showed more talent than with the spade. Some of us, they told us, got quite *blue* by the time we finished our labors. This was the first ground ever broken for a garden at New Archangel."

It remained for Langsdorff, the surgeon and naturalist, to show the dark side among the laborers of the Company. While the officers were dancing and drinking, and keeping healthy with proper food, the workmen were sick with scurvy, and Baranov, whom Russian accounts say was concerned with the well-being of his men, appeared to be callous as to their grievous condition.

"In the month of February," Langsdorff wrote, "out of 150 of the youngest and most healthy men that had been selected from the different settlements and brought hither, eight men were already dead and more than sixty were laid up in the barracks with their strength wholly exhausted, and full of scorbutic sores; the chambers in which they lay had neither stove nor chimney, and the windows were shut close and nailed down.

"The rooms were only warmed by the pestilential breath of such numbers huddled together; and to crown all, not the remotest idea of cleanliness prevailed among them. Besides this, the workmen often came home in the evening wet through, perhaps covered with snow, and lay down upon the bed in their wet clothes and sheepskins, or hung them up in the room to dry, without any one appearing to think of the pernicious consequences that might ensue."

The picture is so dreadfully benighted that we wonder if Langsdorff is exaggerating, but in de Wolfe's story we come upon a casual comment which bears it out:

"The waters of the neighborhood abounded with numerous and choice varieties of the finny tribe, which could be taken at all seasons of the year. The poor Russians might have fared better than they did, had they been spared from their work to catch them. Labor and exposure began to tell on them. The scurvy had killed a number of them and many were sick. Dr. Langsdorff frequently remonstrated in their behalf, to little purpose."

After noting this misery, one comes with some sympathy to accounts of conspiracies by the hunters employed by the Company. Reforms were needed in the treatment of the help that were not put into effect until after Baranov had quit as governor, but meanwhile there were numerous revolts that warned the directors to make life in the colonies healthier and happier for the workers.

The most serious plot was that engineered by the Polish exile Naplavkov. He and his rebels had in mind the exploits of the Polish exile Benyowski, who at Kamchatka overcame the governor and his forces, seized a vessel, and sailed away on a voyage of piracy. Naplavkov intended to kill Baranov, seize firearms and supplies, capture the ship *Otkrytie*, take along a woman for every conspirator, and with a cargo of the Company's furs go to live at ease on some island of the South Seas.

But the Manager had his spies, and these betrayed the plotters. Knowing that a secret meeting was to be held, Baranov gave one of his informants a keg of brandy to take into the midst of the cut-throats, and when they had become reckless under the influence of the drink, he sent an armed force to break into the room.

It was a crucial meeting, and the Polish leader was in the act of having his followers sign the oath of loyalty. Desperately resisting, he thrust the paper into the stove, but one of Baranov's men thrust his hand into the flames and brought out the document. The fighting Naplavkov was seized and bound, and sent to Okhotsk for trial, where counter-accusations of cruelty were directed at the General Manager.

## CHAPTER XIX

REZANOV PRETENDED to have a good time when he went to Sitka to visit Baranov, but he was utterly miserable there. What opportunities, he asked himself, was he missing at court while shut up in this clammy prison of fog?

The name California seemed magical to him now. He was absorbed by the book, *Vancouver's Voyages*, and his chief enjoyment was to go over its charts with old Baranov and chart a southern course.

The High Chamberlain reasserted that the entire Sitka colony must be moved out of that bleak and isolated region down the coast toward the sun. Indicating a spot on Vancouver's map—the river the keen and resolute Yankee skipper Gray had found and named Columbia—he said:

"We should have a colony near the mouth of that great river as an entrance into California."

He pointed out that Russians would never be content to settle at this place, New Archangel, when there were Boston ships coming into the harbor with the savor of more comfortable lands—Yankee vessels well provided whose crews told of sunny, fruitful coasts in the south.

"It reminds me," said the High Chamberlain, "of luxurious King Sviatoslav of early Russia who conquered the Bulgarians. 'Here,' he said of Bulgaria, 'shall be the center of my land. All the wealth of the earth comes here: gold, wine, fabrics from the Greeks, silver and horses from the Czechs and Hungarians; fur, wax, honey, and slaves from Russia.'" The High Chamberlain added: "We should have such a resort!"

Baranov answered him sharply:

"The king of the Sandwich Islands, where you would have me build a station, has sent me an invitation to come and visit him. I would like to warm these aging bones of mine in the sun, and to enjoy the caresses of the South Sea women the sea-captains have pleasure with. But, Your Excellency, I have signed a contract to manage this Company."

After an uncomfortable silence, Rezanov insisted that it was his imperative duty to find possible sites for colonies in the south,

and that when the weather was more promising he would sail down toward California, and bring back a cargo of grain.

For all their disagreements, the High Chamberlain wrote generously to the directors about Baranov:

"We all live poorly at New Archangel, but worst of all lives the founder of the colony. . . . I tell you, gentlemen, he is truly an extraordinary person and an original character, whose name is famed the length of the Pacific. The Bostonians esteem and respect him, and savage tribes, in dread of him, offer him friendship from the distant place. While he is overwhelmed by praise from foreign nations, he has to drink the bitter cup of disappointment at home . . . the directors should in a body approach the throne, and ask for new honors for him; or at least to protect him from further slander."

The *Juno*, with a sick crew of Russians and Aleuts, sailed about March first. Intending to enter the troubled mouth of the Columbia, they were set back by a squall. When morning came they found that they had drifted past the difficult entrance, and after endeavoring for several days to find it and pass the bar, they set out for the port of San Francisco, in forbidden California.

Creeping into the harbor, the officers of the *Juno* saw a headland upon which a group of low sprawling white buildings flashed in the sunlight. Listening for forbidding signals, and hearing none, they went in and anchored close to shore.

Then a trumpeted voice: "*Quién es?*"

"*Juno, Russkaya!*"

They saw horsemen issue from the gate of the fort, and Rezanov sent his officers ashore in the skiff.

The parties met amiably, saluted, and searched for a common language. The naturalist von Langsdorff—there was always a German along when the Russians explored—spoke Latin, and the Franciscan priest among the horsemen replied.

Strikingly picturesque was the young Spanish commander in his broad, golden-tasseled sombrero, his crimson serape, and his high deerskin boots with enormous silver spurs. He wore a huge sword, but his hand kept away from it, and his manner was cordial.



The austere Franciscan, Father Uria, said that the young officer in charge was Don Luis Argüello, First Lieutenant, and that he was commanding the fort in the absence of his father, Don José, who had gone with the Governor, Don Arillaga, to Monterey. He informed the naturalist that they had long been expecting a visit of State from two imperial Russian ships.

The scientist told the Franciscan that High Chamberlain Rezanov, aboard the *Juno*, had been the originator of the official voyage of good will of which he had heard, and had stayed over in the Alaskan colony for a friendly visit to ports of the South Pacific.

Upon this the Franciscan grew cordial and extended his hand. Young Don Luis, much impressed, invited the party to have chocolate with him.

Informed of the gracious reception and invitation, Rezanov came grandly ashore. From his smattering of Spanish, the High Chamberlain conjured up a greeting, and from the youth came a flow of soft phrases.

Extra horses had come from the fort, and now the cavalcade rode to the *presidio*, the smaller and more convenient house of the *comandante*. Dismounting in the plaza, they crossed the piazza, penetrated the rose-decked lattices, and entered the rambling house of whitewashed adobe.

As they stood in the doorway, Dona Ignacia the mother came to meet them, attended by a crowd of children whose black eyes flashed with curiosity. The Dona was stout from bearing them, but she stood now with patrician dignity receiving the puzzling visitors her impetuous son had brought.

With his best graces, the High Chamberlain introduced his party; then smilingly took in the children and the room. By St. Michael, how beautiful was the tall black-haired girl who stood beside Dona Ignacia! Catching the warm, roguish glance of her dark liquid eyes, Rezanov's cold heart kindled.

It is not fictional that the girl—Concepción—had charms that thrilled the jaded world-traveler. Von Langsdorff, who could become as enthusiastic about the loveliness of maidens as about the flashing beauty of bird-life, thus pictured her:

"She was distinguished by her vivacity and cheerfulness, her love-inspiring and brilliant eyes, her excellent and beautiful teeth,

her smiling expression and beautiful features, her shapeliness of figure and for a thousand other charms including an artless, natural demeanor."

The girl's quick mind was taking everything in. Father Uria meant to caution her that the Slavs were in error as to religion, and extreme in geography and temperament, but she was asking herself how different they were in their hearts from the young men she knew. Certainly by the way they were watching her they were very much like her guitar-playing cavaliers! *Madre de Dios*, if it was in their nature to admire her, let them enjoy themselves. California was not Madrid.

"Be seated," Dona Ignacia said, with authority, and the Russian officers sat on horsehair sofas, and were served chocolate in magnificent silver by Concha and the Indian servant maid.

As she bent toward him with the heavy silver tray, the High Chamberlain almost succumbed to a delicious dizziness. If one deserved well of the saints, frigid seas could change to balmy ones, and ungainly Aleut women to this vision of delicate grace. He thought of his dead wife, the child-woman Anna. She, too, had breasts rounding for the cupping of a lover's palms. Was it true, as Concha's brother said, that this gorgeous young woman was just fifteen?

Making the best use of his fragmentary Spanish, he began to talk, and when he failed to make himself clear, called on the naturalist and the Franciscan to translate for him. Thus he absorbed Concha's attention with exciting pictures of the Russian court, and of dramatic occurrences on his voyage to the Orient.

As he lay in his berth that evening, he thought of her. It was as if the fog of the north seas had broken and a single liquid star appeared. One must put away at once, he decided, any carnal thought. To tempt her would be to cloud the star.

Ambition for Russia was his true and irreplaceable mistress. Affairs of State were his all-absorbing passion. If he betrayed the girl, it would be a mental seduction. Sitka needed food, and Russia needed California, and a ripe maid of fifteen could be influential with her people and useful to him in serving the empire.

It seemed to be his happy fate to be helped by impressionable

young girls. Little Anna Shelikov—he had married her, and come into a fortune, when she was Concha's age. ,

Padre Uria had fully relaxed his guard. The visitors were indeed charming. The next day, at his invitation, they rode on awkward Mexican saddles to a green valley and passed through an aisle of trees to the wooden gates beyond which rose the red-tiled, whitewashed buildings of the Mission of San Francisco. In the little chapel, the Greek Orthodox Muscovites and the Franciscans of the Roman Church made, each in his own distinct manner, the uniting Sign of the Cross.

A simple lunch . . . a visit to the gardens; to the Indian quarters; to the weaving-rooms; and then—on horseback—to the grain fields and pasture lands, the cattle herds and ranch-houses. Thinking of barren Sitka, Rezanov observed these things with envy and covetousness.

Supper . . . with Indian servants lighting candles and serving roast fowl and delicious steaks, and a generous salad, and the good mission wine.

And then Rezanov gave the padres some fine altar cloths—intended in St. Petersburg as gifts for the disappointing Jesuit advisers in China and Japan.

Following this sacred present, he distributed gifts of English cloths and cottons from the *Juno's* cargo of trade goods.

The response was as he had hoped: "What, señor? Has your ship goods like these to barter?"

"Yes, Holy Fathers, fine English fabrics, leather goods, Yankee shoes, and saws, axes, and farm implements. Whoever offers us food supplies will get them. The tools of your mission need replenishing as surely as my people north starve for the produce of your fields."

"But," said the padres, "the Madrid government has forbidden us to trade with foreign vessels. The officials in Spain do not understand our pressing needs, and make no effort to keep us supplied with clothes and tools. And there is also the bother of customs duties. However, some way should be found.

"We remember that several years ago a vessel from an American port named Salem came along these coasts and stopped at

San Quentin. There they met some of our brethren who had come to the shore for barter. The padres found that this Captain Cleveland from the country of the Puritan sect was a friendly, if misguided, fellow. They themselves were charitable toward heretics. Both groups visited between cabin and camp, and the festival went on for a week. Then they bartered, and was the Governor the wiser? Where there are needs on both sides, there is a Providence to fulfil them."

Rezanov understood.

"I pray that Providence is looking down at us now."

"When the Governor returns from Monterey," Uria said, "we will show him our needs. Musty laws made far away should not hamper the work of God's missions."

Though scrupulous in enforcing the laws, the Governor closed his eyes to the intrigue by which, through a Spanish middleman, the padres obtained the goods they wanted, and the *Juno* received a cargo of grain and other provisions. Concha's persuasions had helped Rezanov.

There were informal candle-lighted parties in the evening at the fort, attended by the garrison and the families round about, and in the native dances Concha starred, dancing the *jota* with her upraised fingers playing the clappers to the tap of her wooden heels, and the music of the guitars.

Rezanov was actually courting the girl now. The swarthy young Spaniards so natively handsome in their colorful garbs seemed to understand why she was being swept away. When they saw her teaching Spanish steps to the High Chamberlain—so magnificent in his full-dress red and green uniform, and so enviable with the jeweled maltese cross suspended from his neck, and with the large shining star of the Order of St. Anne pinned over his heart—they admitted that an irresistible prince had come ashore from the unimpressive vessel. If they were so dazzled, how natural it was for the adorable Concha to choose to be a Princess of Europe rather than the mistress of a ranchería on a coast which even their mother country had forgotten. Nevertheless, some of them wished to drive a dagger through the medallion of St. Anne.

Rezanov was addressing the girl as "*Concha carita*" now, and she was calling him "Nikolai." Seated before the fireplace on chill evenings, he sipped the sweet California wine and went to the very end of Spanish convention, kissing her fingertips. And as he sat there he implanted in her a desire to see old Russia, and to live there as his bride.

In the moonlight in the patio, he asked her if she would really like to see St. Petersburg, and she asked him in turn why he tantalized her.

"I mean it. I want you to go there as my bride."

"Why should one as grand as you desire a girl of a different race, who has no fortune, and whose education is that of the kitchen and meadows?"

"I love you—that is enough reason! May I ask your noble father?"

"Yes, Nikolai."

Against the danger of becoming involved in an immediate marriage, he spoke of his duty to the Emperor, and his need for a royal sanction of the wedding. Concha shed tears for him when he dejectedly received news that Czar Alexander had been badly defeated by Napoleon.

In the privacy of his room, when the lover changed back to the Russian diplomat, he thought how easy it would be to take over these green lands and to convert them into huge farms controlled by the Russian-American Company. Perhaps, if there were not enough Indians to work them, they could import Chinese laborers—or snatch Japanese subjects from the Kurile Islands. Suspecting that England had designs on the California harbors, Rezanov was seriously plotting to take over the entire San Francisco Bay area.

The hand that had been so ardently squeezing Concha's slender one was penning secretly messages to Count Rumiantsov, Chancellor of the Empire and Minister of Commerce. There was a way to send these sealed messages to St. Petersburg by way of Mexico.

As to the fortifications of San Francisco port he wrote:

"I am sure they have increased their artillery-placements since Vancouver was here. We later secretly inspected this battery and

found five brass guns of 12-pounds caliber. They say they have seven at the fort but whether they have more or less I do not know as I was never in the actual fortifications and allowed no one else to go as I wished to disarm suspicions. . . .”

As to his plan to take over the coast southward from the mouth of the Columbia River, he informed his superior:

“If we can obtain the means for the beginning of the plan, I think I may safely say that we would attract around us a population of various parts; thereafter, in the course of ten years, we would be strong enough to make use of any favorable turn in European politics to include *the coast of California among Russian possessions*. . . . The Spanish are after all very weak in this region. . . .”

As to his courtship of the artless Concha:

“Your Serenity will laugh when I tell you we owe our prosperity here to the fair sex. . . . Finally I imperceptibly created in her an impatience to hear something serious from me on the subject, which caused me to ask for her hand, to which she consented.”

In the same series of letters the diplomat informed the Count that he was making love to the girl “for reasons of State.”

A charitable observer believed that Rezanov sincerely fell in love with Concha after a flirtation for diplomatic reasons. The naturalist von Langsdorff wrote in his journal: “Her bright and sparkling eyes had at last made an impression on him and pierced his inmost soul.”

For all of this, we come out of our study of Rezanov’s romance with this vivid Spanish girl convinced that he played the part of a saboteur in the house of a gracious, hospitable family. “Nothing escaped me long,” he wrote exultingly to Rumiantsov—nothing except honor!

There was of course vehement opposition from Don José and Dona Ignacia, and milder protests from the families of the community, and from the Franciscans. But Concha’s passion overcame the protestors. After all, the parents and the friends said at last, it could go no farther than a betrothal. The Russian had frankly stated that he must get the consent of his Emperor, who was at war with the ruler of Spain. And then there would be

rigid Church barriers to overcome. It would be at least two years before the disturbing official could return—meantime Concha might be snatched away by one of their own cavaliers.

A formal betrothal ceremony followed, with the sad Franciscans celebrating the Mass, and with Concha radiant despite all forebodings.

Rezanov's companions, accustomed to a quick consummation of courtship, shook their heads, and guessed that the unimpassioned High Chamberlain had other game in sight. They took his success in obtaining a food cargo for the *Juno* as a sign that he was winning a diplomatic game in which a lovely girl had been used as a dupe.

The week before the ship sailed was crowded with celebrations. A festival had been planned at Don José's rancho thirty miles to the south, and invitations were sent to friends along the coast. Parties of young people came in merry cavalcades from Monterey, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Diego. The élite of old California's families journeyed there also. In their richest, most glorious apparel came the cavaliers and their wives—the Luis, Rodriguez, and Lopez families; the Estradas, Ortegas, Peraltas, Estudillos, and de la Guerras.

They came with laughter, and to the music of guitars, but when they were presented to the High Chamberlain their glances were as keen as the points of daggers, and the blessings they murmured were insincere. What a silly girl was Concha to choose a cold and incomprehensible Russian to a young and handsome youth of gallant and ardent Spanish blood.

All too soon passed the hours of dancing and pageantry and breath-taking contests by picturesque vaqueros. Then Masses were said for the safety of the voyagers, and Concha, in a touching farewell, pledged her grave lover that she would wait for him forever. Her waving scarf and her "Come back swiftly, my beloved," in Spanish, were to haunt the too-accomplished diplomat.

Back to Sitka went Rezanov, welcomed by the hungry people there as a reliever sent from God. Even the realistic Baranov ad-

mitted that the romantic High Chamberlain had done practical things.

Before bad weather set in, the ambassador sailed to Okhotsk in the new vessel, the *Avoss*, which the unflagging Baranov had built in his shipyard. On his arrival at the miserable Kamchatka port, Rezanov's vindictiveness toward Japan became active, and he commanded officers Davidov and Rhvostov, of the *Juno* and *Avoss*, to voyage down past the Kurile Islands, attack villages, take prisoners and transport them to Japonski Island, off Sitka. History remembered this against him. Golovnin, in his journal published in 1864, wrote:

"I am ashamed to say, but must: Rezanov wished to capture Japanese to settle in America and to use them in the company work; he designated for their settlement an island and named it Japonski Island, which to this time among the Russian *promyshlenniki* carries that name."

When the lieutenants heard Rezanov's code-violating orders, they looked at him incredulously, then rebelliously, but he snapped:

"Do as I say! We have justification for this course. I have informed the Emperor of my plan. The Kurile Islands belong to Russia by right of discovery, and the Japanese are trespassers upon them."

With this flinging of dragons' teeth, Rezanov set out on horseback to travel the same dreadful 7000 miles to St. Petersburg which he had traveled in misery years before. Ambition was girding him again. Europe was in such a mess that he feared the Czar had lost sight of him.

He would have been wiser if he had decided to remain in Siberian obscurity.

Dizzy spells he had suffered from before recurred on the rough postroad. Forging a river on horseback, his clothes became soaked, and when he awoke the next morning he was feverish. Yet he insisted on remounting, and rode on for weeks in ill health, remembering that his father-in-law had died after such a journey. At last he fell from the horse in a faint, but again per-



sisted, and came in agony to Irkutsk, where he was put to bed under the care of good physicians.

When he gained his feet after three weeks, the enthusiastic town insisted on paying honor to the grand visitor, its former citizen, but when he appeared at the feast it was as if Death were the guest of honor. The sparkle went out of the occasion as they noticed that the High Chamberlain had scarcely enough strength to rise to his feet and answer their subdued toasts.

The following morning, attended by the anxious chief physician of Irkutsk, he set out for Krasnoyarsk, doggedly choosing to travel on horseback. When near his destination, he fainted again and fell from his horse. It was a fatal fall, for a hoof struck his head, and some days later he died.

His ambitions had always raced before Nikolai Rezanov and set traps for him. The imperial web of the Russian-American Company had gone only as far as the miserable stockade at Sitka. The magnificent embassy to Japan had come to an inglorious ending, and his later impulse for revenge was folly indeed. His passion for diplomatic intrigue had put on paper statements that were to make his part in the romance with María de la Concepción Argüello appear that of a spy and deceiver. And at last the brave but foolish way he had driven his sick body across Siberia to regain his place in the circle of Czar Alexander had been the death of him. There were in him the elements of a great statesman, and it is pitiful that they did not blend into final nobility.

## CHAPTER XX

IT WAS, ODDLY enough, a "Boston man" who put the edge on the Russian-American Company's decision to found a colony in California.

Baranov, in his customary way, had made a contract with Captain John Ayres, of the ship *Mercury*, for hunting in Spanish waters, with Aleut hunters aboard. Returning to Sitka, Ayres reported that at the mouth of the Columbia River he had met a party of Americans who were erecting a fortified post. Though they were probably trappers instead of settlers, the General Manager grew alarmed. Imagining American colonists coming be-

tween him and his goal, he went to work in earnest to establish a station in California, giving his faithful lieutenant Kuskov charge of the exploration and building.

Previously—about the time of Lewis and Clark's penetration into Oregon—Kuskov had anchored for months in Bodega Bay, close to San Francisco harbor. He returned to this bay when authorized to found a post, and brought with him enough colonists and equipment to establish a station.

Going northward up a coaxing river, he purchased a tract of land. Tradition says that the deal was as favorable a one for the white man as was the purchase price of Manhattan: Kuskov paid the Indian chief three blankets, two axes, three hoes, and a lot of beads.

On a high shelf of land sloping from wooded hills to the edge of a cove, he built Fort Rossiya (Russia), which the Forty-Niners were to call Fort Ross. Its location was about eight miles up the Russian River, in Sonoma County. Enthusiastic about the site, the Russians named the river Slavianska (Charming Little One).

The next step in Russia's expansion down the Pacific—an outpost in the Sandwich, or Hawaiian, Islands—followed the establishing of Fort Ross, whose fate appears in a later chapter.

Baranov, who had been to the sunny islands only in dream, had, as he confessed to the High Chamberlain, hoped to spend vacations in this carnal Eden whose luxuriant maidens garlanded the visitors with floral wreaths and danced before them sinuously in revealing grass skirts. He hungered to be comforted by these sirens, but he also knew of the importance of the islands to Russia's sea empire, and waited only for shipping facilities, and the growth of the navy. Ten years after Rezanov's embassy had visited the islands, the General Manager had sent the *Bering* to explore Hawaii, and when she was wrecked on the island of Kauai, he schemed to make the failure a means of getting a foothold.

There was no shipmaster at Sitka when news came to him of the loss of the vessel and the seizure of her cargo, but there was Doctor Scheffer, curiously eager to win fame as a conqueror and colonizer rather than as a physician.

The doctor, a German born in Russia, had won favor with

Baranov by quarreling with the haughty, trade-despising commander of the *Suvarov*, a naval ship built expressly for an expedition to Russian America. Whenever the General Manager saw a ship of the navy come into the harbor, he coveted it as a transporter of furs, and in the case of the *Suvarov*, whose commander put to sea from Sitka rather than carry peltry, Baranov had sent boats after the vessel, and had threatened to fire on her. Scheffer, physician of the ship, had remained at New Archangel, and having a gift of tongues, he convinced Baranov that he was the man to start a colony in Hawaii.

Their heads together over a steaming pot of rum, Baranov gave the doctor a commission to go to Hawaii and salvage the *Bering's* cargo, and in so doing obtain a toehold in the islands.

Scheffer went to Honolulu as a passenger on a foreign vessel, the *Isabella*, that had touched at Sitka. Baranov promised that the *Otkrytie*, under Lieutenant Podushkin, would follow in the spring with native mechanics and workmen for the purpose of building an outpost.

Presenting himself before the king of kings, Kamehameha, the doctor delivered messages and presents from Baranov, there having been several such exchanges with Boston skippers as go-betweens. Then Scheffer politely complained that King Tomari had seized the cargo of the *Bering*. Visiting the sub-king Tomari later, the physician cured the queen of fever, and the king of dropsy. Thus in the good graces of the monarch, Scheffer obtained from him an agreement to return the *Bering's* cargo, and to trade in sandalwood with the Russian-American Company; and to give the Company the right to establish stations.

In return, the doctor had the audacity to conspire with Tomari to overthrow Kamehameha, pledging to supply five hundred men and some armed vessels. Acute English and American traders told Kamehameha what was brewing.

With no purpose to help Baranov's commercial schemes, the high-minded young commander Kotzebue visited Hawaii in the *Rurik* at this time, and boldly set up flags for the purpose of surveying the harbor. As he planted them among the Hawaiian banners, he was forced to observe that the native banners curiously resembled the American and British standards. To concili-

ate both powers, the native king had embodied their flag designs in his own. The Hawaiian banner consisted of the English union and seven alternated red, white and blue stripes, representing the principal islands.

Kamehameha, in a white shirt, blue pantaloons, a red waistcoat, and a colored neckcloth, stood surrounded by ministers who wore black coats over naked bodies. As he received Kotzebue he complained:

"A Russian physician, named Scheffer, who came here some time ago, pretended that he had been sent by King Alexander to botanize my islands. I not only gave him this permission, but also promised him every assistance; and made him a present of a piece of land, with laborers, so that he would never want for provisions. What was the consequence of my hospitality? Even before he left Hawaii he repaid my kindness with ingratitude, which I bore patiently.

"Then he settled in the fruitful island of Oahu, where he proved himself my most inveterate enemy, exciting against me, in the island of Kauai, King Tomari, who had submitted to my power years before. Scheffer is there at this very moment and threatens my islands."

Under savage pressure from the alarmed Kamehameha, Tomari drove the doctor out of the island. The fulminating Scheffer went to St. Petersburg, where he urged the Foreign Office to take over the Hawaiian Islands. But reports came to the court from the trustworthy explorers Kotzebue, Krusenstern and Lizianski, and the Foreign Office decided that Russia did not have a navy strong enough to support the enterprise against her great maritime rivals.

The Hawaiian adventure had been the crowning enterprise of Baranov's old age, and when it failed he lost heart as to the ultimate success of the Company. The British navy and the merchant fleet of the Americans seemed impossible to cope with.

The old man took it as an omen that if the organization failed at Hawaii it would fail also in California, and be doomed to be a dwindling operation beset always by ice, fog, crafty competitors, and native hostility. The directors did not let him forget that the

Hawaiian project which failed had cost the Company 200,000 roubles.

Russians who were with Baranov in his closing days as General Manager have given us pictures of him whose warmth is in happy contrast to the cold displeasure of the remote directors.

His face was covered with wrinkles and he was completely bald, but he still looked younger than his years. It was his eyes that indicated victory over decay. Life, zest and energy sparkled in them.

That he could live so long with his habits of eating was a mystery. He rose early and ate one meal a day, and while there was no certain time for this meal, he was ready at any moment to drink raw rum or vodka, or boiling punch.

He had long since got rid of the Kenaitze princess—having, on his return from an expedition, discovered her in the arms of another man—but her daughter, Irene, seventeen, was always with him. There was in this attractive and talented girl some of her father's fondness for the arts, and when he was sick and cross she soothed him by playing the piano.

Contemptuous of women, considering them only creatures for a man's pleasure, he adored this creole daughter, and employed a German governess to guard and train her. When he lost his temper with the governess, he was tortured with fear that she would leave and that Irene's education would suffer.

One night, entering his kitchen, he became furious on discovering the teacher taking a glass of rum, and drove her out of the house. But the next morning he sent messengers to bring her to him, and when she came he apologized for his blows and gave her presents.

"Stay with us," he said, "and drink if you want, but promise me never to let my daughter see you do it!"

The governess agreed and stayed, and he depended on her to take Irene to separate quarters when he felt himself getting drunk.

The several Indian and creole women of his bleak seraglio endured his fits of anger for the feasts that followed. At one moment one of his explosions would drive the women and the serv-

ants out into the night, but a little while later he was sending for them to come to a feast. If there were visiting skippers to entertain, more Kolosh women would be sent for. It was at such times that this Old King Cole called for his group of singers, who solemnized for a moment the bacchanal by singing his composition, "The Spirit of the Russian Hunter."

His successor was always in sight, although he did not perceive him. Captain Hagemeister, who a decade before, as lieutenant on the *Neva*, had brought him news that the imperial government had bestowed on him the order of St. Anne of the third class, was sent out in 1815 at the head of an expedition, with orders to take Baranov's place, if he found it necessary. During the winter he concealed his orders, but it became plain that Baranov was no longer capable of managing the Company. It is curious that the evidence the Russian directors gathered to convince themselves that Baranov was senile was that he had become devoted to religion.

At last, convinced of his duty, Hagemeister laid before Baranov his orders.

"Alexander Andrevich, you will see that I have been commissioned by the directorate to relieve you of your office."

Baranov concealed his pain. "I have long been looking for relief," he said.

Alongside of the new manager stood Khlebnikov, a commissioner of finance.

Baranov understood what was expected of him and got up out of his sick-bed.

"You will want to go over my accounts."

They went through his books with cold and exacting efficiency, but every pelt and coin of the property valued at two and a half million roubles was accounted for. All they could complain of was that he had been liberal in his hospitality.

He had made no plans for retirement and, having no ties remaining in the old country, considered living in a favored spot in Alaska, but he permitted himself to be persuaded by the ubiquitous Captain Golovnin to go to St. Petersburg aboard the returning vessel *Kutusov*.

He was troubled about his daughter Irene's future, but the likable and democratic Lieutenant Yanovski, of the *Kutusov*, offered a solution.

"I love Irene—please permit me to marry her," he said.

Baranov was overjoyed. He thought of the missionaries who had scolded him for his loose ways with women, and chuckled. Religion and respectability were persistent in trying to redeem the wandering goat. His offspring Irene would be most solemnly married, and the illegitimate Indian blood would almost die out in her children. His heart was warm as he gave her to Yanovski.

He was proud that his son-in-law was to remain at Sitka as Assistant General Manager. The old man recommended his hunters and the women to Yanovski's care, and was pleased when the latter told him that he had been ordered to make an inspection of the posts, and would take Irene with him.

"That is good," he said. "Irene understands our people."

The farewell of his friends was so tender that he almost decided to abandon the voyage and follow his wish to build a home among them, but he was in the grip of the adventure, and went along.

The route was via the East Indies, and the change to a tropical climate sickened him. When the vessel left Batavia after a long stay, he was so weak that he had to be carried aboard. He died at sea and the body inured to bleakness had its burial in the warm Indian Ocean.

He was an original character—a free spirit, independent in action despite the dictatorial influence of the directors. While asking much, he suffered with his men all the hardships of the enterprise.

Out of his experience in the imprisoning fogs of the isolated northwest world, he became world-minded, and while the Crown urged aloofness from nations, he welcomed foreigners and did business with skippers sailing under competitive flags. His poem, "The Spirit of the Russian Hunter," suggests that Yermak the Cossack was his hero. Did he not name one of his exploring vessels the *Yermak*?

Of all of the Russian leaders of the Pacific Northwest, he was most akin to our own boisterous mariners and traders. When he

was in charge of the Company, Americans were closer in spirit to the Russians of the Northwest than at any time since.

## CHAPTER XXI

THE AMERICAN WAY to the Pacific. . . .

"Manifest destiny." It was a phrase much heard in orations as the frontier of America advanced westward. It was still ringing when Seward purchased Alaska, and it echoed when Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila harbor, but since then our country has been contented with what it owns of land and sea, and the phrase has died out. The era of air power promises to revive it. Be that as it may, it is the theme of this American chapter.

Thomas Jefferson had bought Louisiana from First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte, and that meant the opening up of the trans-Mississippi country. With the Alleghanies behind us, it was natural that our race should obey the call of rivers running westward, and in the end resolve to reach and gain the shores of the Pacific. Our trappers and traders had the same incentives—and in the Missouri the same kind of helpful waterway—as had the Russians in their trans-Siberian march.

Pioneer in the vision of a United States extending to the Pacific coast was President Thomas Jefferson. Putting to use the statecraft he had acquired on missions to Europe, he sent Lewis and Clark to follow the Missouri and thence explore the north by way of the little-known Columbia River.

Aside from the President's wish to send people from the eastern seaboard to settle in the interior and prevent its occupation by French colonists, he had also in mind the Russian push across Siberia and down the Pacific coast, which conflicted with our whaling and fishing interests. Had he not while abroad backed the harum-scarum young American John Ledyard in his futile journey in the track of the Russian hunters across Siberia? Had not Catherine II, in arresting and deporting Ledyard, suspected



that some country had sent him to spy on Russia's fur trade on the Pacific?

Just as Rezanov disguised his mission to California, Jefferson, to deceive the French and Spanish, provided for Lewis and Clark the fiction that they were scholars making an "innocent literary journey," though their assignment was to chart rivers and fertile meadows, and to recommend locations for forts.

After their good report had aroused the East, John Jacob Astor organized his fur company and chose Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia, as a site for his Pacific trading-post. Profiting by the reports of Jefferson's scouts, his trappers journeyed part way up the Missouri, and swung southwest, crossing the Continental Divide below the country we now call Yellowstone Park. Then they followed the Snake River to the Columbia, where they took the route of Lewis and Clark. A central route to the west coast was in the making.

Then came that interesting team of President Monroe and his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Their contribution to our western march was to warn Great Britain and Russia that we were coming to the Pacific. This they did by announcing the Monroe Doctrine: ". . . the American continents are no longer subject for any European colonial establishments." Any attempt by foreign powers to establish colonies in America, they said, would be regarded as dangerous to the peace of the United States. The Czar of Russia was largely responsible for bringing forth this declaration, because a short time before he had issued a ukase asserting Russia's claims in the Pacific Ocean.

Meanwhile, our trappers and traders were following the Missouri, and making trails to the next northern navigable river flowing west. Powder River, Platte, Yellowstone, Big Horn, Clark, Snake and finally Columbia River, flowing into the Pacific—these streams guided our explorers and hunters and helped them to make swift advances.

In 1804 no white American had gone farther west than the Little Missouri, but two years later Lewis met two American traders on a western river, and when in 1808 John Jacob Astor's party went up the Missouri and then struck southwest to the Yel-

lowstone, they met trapper and trader from Missouri searching for beaver pelts along all the important western streams. As the Russians founded fortified trading-posts at strategic points along the mighty Siberian rivers, so did we in our west.

St. Louis for outfitting; Independence, Westport, or Kansas City for the starting-off place for the prairie crossing. The trail the trapper made along Indian traces became the broader way for the man with a packhorse; for the trader with his wagon bulging with goods to be exchanged for furs; and for the settlers' prairie schooners.

Meanwhile, our first far-venturing Americans had encountered the hunters of the Hudson's Bay Company in disputed Oregon, and were sending East urgent appeals that we acquire Oregon before the British claimed it by settlement.

The Congress pricked its ears and plied its tongues, grumbling that it had received no scientific report of the Oregon country since Lewis and Clark explored it. There were conferences with Army heads, and in 1831 the Army sent the dramatic Captain B. L. E. Bonneville, U.S.A., to serve as its scout. We, too, in a minor way, had our Rezanovs. Going as a fur-trader, Bonneville's main purpose, aside from making charts, was to find out how many Englishmen the Hudson's Bay Company had sent into Oregon. Our purpose was to end the joint occupancy of Oregon with Great Britain, and to encourage our people, of their own free will, to settle there.

Bonneville set up his fake trading-post on the western slope of the Continental Divide, where South Pass spread out for miles to give entrance through the mountains to the Pacific coast.

As always, the trapper and trader had made trails for the military man.

In 1828, Jedediah Smith, with the Bible and a Methodist hymnal in his knapsack, led his trappers across the high Sierras into California—the first party of white men that had ever gone that way. Trading with the Kelawetset tribe, he found them apparently amiable, and though he had forbidden his men to permit them to enter camp was so confident of safety that he went in a

canoe up a river with John Turner, Richard Leland, and an Indian guide. In his absence the Indians massacred the party and stole their valuable packs of furs. Smith and his two companions were attacked on the river, but escaped by swimming underwater to the farther bank. Fort Vancouver, the Hudson's Bay Company's post in Oregon, lay one hundred and fifty miles northward. Living on herbs and reptiles, the trio made their way to it.

On a prairie on the north side of the Columbia River, about five miles from the mouth of the Willamette, stood Fort Vancouver, whose chief factor was Dr. John McLoughlin, a gray-headed giant whom the fearful Indians called "White-Headed Eagle." Canadian born, of an Irish father and a Scotch mother, he was friendly and hospitable toward Americans. Having been informed of the massacre of the Smith party by Arthur Black, the only survivor of the camp group, McLoughlin sent out a searching party, but it was a friendly chief, Kesano, who guided Smith, Turner, and Leland to the fort.

McLoughlin refreshed and comforted them, and sent the feared Tom McKay with a party of fifty men to punish the murderers and recover the goods. Meeting Indians coming down to the fort to sell the stolen peltries, McKay picked out the furs that bore the marks of the American trappers.

"These," he said, "belong to the murdered Americans. Look to the killers for payment."

Jedediah Smith thus had restored to him peltries which he sold to McLoughlin for \$3200.

George Simpson, Honorable Governor of the entire Hudson's Bay Company, chanced to be at the fort when Smith was brought in. Smith sent a letter to John H. Eaton, Secretary of War, at Washington, protesting against the British-American treaty of joint occupancy of Oregon made in 1818 and renewed in 1827, and complaining that the British were trapping solely in United States territory, but he acknowledged that he owed "thanks to Governor Simpson and the gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company for the hospitable treatment which he had received from them, and for the efficient and successful aid which they gave him."

Governor Simpson was writing also, to his Company in Lon-

don. He informed the directors that Smith had told him that the Americans intended to build rafts in the Rocky Mountains to float horses, cattle, plows and household goods down the Willamette River into Oregon. But the Governor comforted the directors by adding:

"I am of the opinion we have little to apprehend from settlers in this quarter."

Four years later, twelve leather-clad Americans came to the gate of Fort Vancouver, as if they were messengers of American progress come to make good the predictions of pious Jedediah Smith. Received by McLoughlin in his comfortable hall, the leader announced:

"I am Nathaniel J. Wyeth, from Boston, and my men are all New Englanders. We have come overland, and our purpose is to trade on the Columbia."

The Chief Factor could scarcely believe what he had heard, and yet the fellow seemed fanatical enough to have made the unbelievable overland journey. McLoughlin learned later, with much amusement, that the "mountain men" with whom Wyeth's party had traveled from St. Louis to the Snake River, had had fun with scholar-trader Wyeth. The New Englander, having planned very studiously for the voyage, was bringing the benefits of his education to show trappers how to travel with comfort on rivers and across prairies. His inventions had been laughed at and discarded by the veterans, but they had admired Wyeth's erudition, pluck and grit.

The Chief Factor received the Bostonians hospitably, and gave the quizzical Scots and the French-Canadians in his employ the benefits of New England culture by assigning quarters in the stockade to the Yankees.

The New Englanders at home who supported Wyeth had studied the earlier voyages of the Boston men. Confident that Wyeth would arrive safely, they had invested in a ship loaded with goods for the trade. It was lost at sea, but its successor, the *May Dacre*, arrived at last, and then Wyeth began to compete vigorously with the British traders. Almost under the not-so-dangerous guns of Fort Vancouver, he built a stockade.

The Chief Factor and the Captain remained friendly, dined to-

gether, and exchanged gifts, but every move of the Boston men was matched and checked by one of King George's men. When Wyeth built Fort Hall on the Snake, on July 14, 1834, the British built Fort Boise close to it to attract the Indian trade—they paid more for furs and sold goods to the Indians for less.

Ruined, Wyeth sold out to the Hudson's Bay Company, but told the Chief Factor that the end of the Hudson's Bay Company was almost in sight, that the oncoming Americans would not permit Oregon to be isolated as a game preserve and hunting-ground for a private company.

"But," said McLoughlin, "you will have to cross mountains and terrible deserts, and fight your way through savage tribes, or else come on a year's voyage by ocean."

"We will come across country from St. Louis," said Wyeth. "The movement is growing. It will become irresistible."

Since Fort Hall was located somewhat east of the point where the trail to California left the Oregon trace, adventurous settlers who had defied the rule of Mexico and settled in California sent scouts to the fort to persuade the immigrants to abandon their goal—the Columbia River in Oregon—and take the trail to California across northern Nevada.

Joel Palmer in his journal, said:

"While we remained in this place—Fort Hall—great efforts were made to induce the emigrants to pursue the route to California. The most extravagant tales were told respecting the dangers that awaited a trip to Oregon, and of the difficulties and trials to be surmounted. The perils of the way were so magnified as to make us suppose the journey to Oregon almost impossible. . . . On the other hand, as an inducement to pursue the California route, we were informed of the shortness of the route, when compared with that of Oregon; as also of many superior advantages it possessed. . . . Mr. Greenwood, an old mountaineer, well stocked with falsehoods, had been despatched from California to pilot the emigrants through; and, assisted by a young man named McDougal, from Indiana, so far succeeded as to induce thirty-five or thirty-six wagons to take that trail."

Ever since Captain Gray, of New England, had found the Columbia in 1792—penetrating the turbulent entrance to it that had confused British and Russian skippers—our people of the Atlantic seaboard had been peculiarly interested in the Columbia. Lewis and Clark's reports of it had made it a river of romance, and when John Jacob Astor founded Astoria there, and was forced to relinquish it to the Hudson's Bay Company by the breaking out of the War of 1812, it remained a national objective. By our path-finding, a way was being laid—a line from the Missouri to the Columbia—that was to open Oregon to the possessive Americans. And from Oregon, the valley of the Willamette was a kindly invitation into California.

The British claim to the Columbia was based on its geographical situation. Its source was in British territory, and they had followed the Columbia to the sea. But the discovery of the mouth of the river had given it by international law to the Americans. Great Britain herself had established that law.

A British game preserve, or a dwelling-place for American families? Old "manifest destiny" was favoring the Americans who had begun to drift in across the wide expanses between Hudson's Bay stations.

William H. Ashley of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was a leader. Hundreds of American trappers came, led by such men as Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Etienne Provit, Hugh Glass. Eloquent, sacrificial ministers followed: Marcus Whitman, H. H. Spalding and their devoted wives. Jason Lee, preacher, returned east to take the platform and inspire people to pull up stakes and go to Oregon. The Yankee storekeeper, the Southern planter, the herder, the schoolteacher, all were in the slow but sure procession.

Dr. John Marsh, an American resident of California, was sending enthusiastic letters about California to Missouri papers, and these letters were being copied by Eastern journals. Hall J. Kelley, a traveler imbued with the spirit of expansion, while writing a report to the Congress about Oregon, was devoting half the allotted space to praise of California, saying that its annexation was

"a matter easy of accomplishment and most earnestly to be desired."

Richard Henry Dana, traveling around the Horn, and writing *Two Years Before the Mast*, was putting a magnetic charm into his pages.

The businesslike Western Emigration Society was circularizing the people of the Middle West, and out of their promoting was to come the party of settlers headed by John Bidwell, "Prince of California Pioneers." In his party were Mrs. Benjamin Kelsey and her little daughter, whose safe journey to the coast encouraged Jessie Fremont, Mrs. Dr. Gwin, Phoebe Hearst, Susan Mills, and the other pioneer women.

So it was that these prairie hunters and mountain men opened the way for settlers in covered wagons, whose long wagon trains creaked day after day, week after week, toward blue mountains they never seemed to approach. Two-horse or four-horse teams—or maybe oxen—plodded on with a gaunt pioneer in the seat above the beasts, his long whirling lash making bee-sounds above their unmindful ears.

Women in gingham sat alongside the driver, or looked out from the cavern of canvas bulging with furnishings and utensils. Children poked their tanned and freckled faces out from every opening. Boys on foot, trudged manfully beside the horses, hoping to be promoted to scouthood with liberty to range on a pony ahead of the train.

Then camps at sundown, and the roping of horses and cattle, and the grouping of wagons for effective defense, and the men making a fire in the center, and the women getting out their sheet-iron pots and pans and cups and plates of tinware, and rummaging for coffee and bacon, and cornmeal for flapjacks, and dried beans and fruit, and the butter that had been churned in a bottle.

Free people they were, imperiling their lives to find a larger freedom. From their insecurity they gained strength.

This independence of our westering people was lacking among the Russians of the trans-Siberian trail. The early czars, with Cossack troops as harsh shepherds, herded entire villages from their

cherished homes in old Russia along roads of misery to lonely settlements, and later migrations had usually government pressure behind them. The forts built along the roads and rivers of Siberia and the Amur were manned as much to watch their own convicts as to protect the villages from foes.

Our American trek trended toward contention and conflict with the Spanish, British, or Russians. By northern lakes and rivers flowing west, the British also had advanced down into California, the Hudson's Bay Company having founded a branch of its Fort Vancouver station on San Francisco Bay, competing with the Russians at Fort Ross near Bodega Bay, close to the Golden Gate. The weak Spanish government still controlled California. We were on the way to engaging in an international battle royal, but resolute President Polk won the decision for the United States.

Having thus sketched the parallel American march to the Pacific, we turn the clock back some years, and show the curious schemes and events by which Russia won an easier road to the unfrozen Pacific through Chinese territory and avoided a conflict with the Americans who took over California and faced northward.



## MURAVIOV FORCES A WAY THROUGH CHINA TO THE PACIFIC

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### CHAPTER XXII

ONE DAY IN 1847, the determined Czar Nicholas I went away from the palace on what appeared to be a drive of inspection through the province of Tula, but he had a secret purpose.

On the way, he sent word to General Muraviov, who had won distinction in the Crimea and was now serving as a governor, to meet the royal cavalcade in the town of Sergiefvska.

Nicholas had had a troubled career. The soldiers his brother Alexander had taken to France after Waterloo had caught the contagion of freedom, equality, and fraternity, and when Alexander died, and Nicholas had succeeded him, these new young liberals made a demonstration, demanding a constitution. He had been forced to begin his reign by shooting and hanging some and exiling others to Siberia. He had now been Czar for many years, but the ghosts of the young liberals still haunted him. He sincerely believed that thinkers were the most dangerous element of the people, and his command to them was always: "Submit and obey!"

He had been humiliated in Europe; and from domestic troubles and European disappointments he turned with relief to the East, and imagined himself fulfilling the great dreams there of Peter the Great. Asia instead of Europe was to be the royal watchword. Under him, Panslavism was created.

At seven in the morning, Nicholas received the astonished Muraviov, and dumfounded him by saying:

"You will be the new Governor-General of Eastern Siberia. Your appointment will create consternation among my cautious, indolent, aging officials, but the historic enterprise I have in mind requires a man of courage, vigor, and action."

"It is a great honor, Your Majesty, to have you think that I possess those qualities. Such that I have will be devoted to your service."

"I wish you to redeem for Russia the loss of the valley of the Amur. When we were forced to withdraw from it in 1689 by the humiliating treaty of Nertchinsk, we lost an easy access to the wealthy markets of the Pacific, and forced ourselves to expand in a difficult and discouraging way—by going to the American coast.

"How splendid it would be for our future to control the Amur. It has been reported to me that it runs for hundreds of miles along the frontiers of Manchuria—a vast tract of fertile, unsettled country. The road across Siberia that should have ended for us in the country of sun, stopped instead in a region as bleak and frozen as our own Russia. It must not always be so.

"The noble Peter the Great mourned always that we had lost the short route to the Pacific by way of the Amur. He said that there were three points of importance to Russia: the Don, the Neva, and the Amur. For our eastern development, I think the Amur is the most important.

"That ancient infernal treaty robbed us of easy access to the Pacific; robbed Eastern Siberia and our stations in America of convenient food supplies; robbed us of a dominating place in the markets of China; and prevented us from forcing Japan to open her ports to us. If we possess the mouth of the Amur on the Pacific, we will have a naval base invaluable in our competition

with the sea-power of other nations. See, my dear General, what a glorious opportunity I give you to help in the fulfilment of the Russian empire."

Muraviov murmured his appreciation.

"We must keep our plans secret. Count Nesselrode—who should be titled the Minister of Restricted Russia rather than the Minister of Foreign Affairs—opposes me in my wish to retake the Amur. He discourages any thought of expansion in the Far East. After you have established yourself in Eastern Siberia, and made the necessary plans, we will surprise the cautious fellow."

"Sire, I am overwhelmed and abashed."

"Come, come. Modesty is out of place now. I remember your distinguished services in the war against the Turks, and in the Caucasus. I like your bold vision, and value your administrative abilities. Be brave, be quick, be tireless in pursuing the goals I select for you. If torpid and corrupt officials stand in your way, sweep them aside. You may send copies of your reports privately to me, and I will support you with authority, men, money, vessels and supplies. When can you come to St. Petersburg?"

"Immediately, Your Majesty."

"Stay here two weeks, so that your successor can have no complaint. When you come to St. Petersburg, study especially the file of papers relating to the Amur River and determine what regions we must recover—and annex."

Arriving in the capital, the sensational new official hid himself from jealous eyes among the archives of the Siberian administration. He saw before he entered the country that it would be necessary for Russia to control the headwaters of the Amur, its mouth on the Pacific, and also the region around the entrance.

In planning this conquest, Nicholas was urged by his jealousy of the British, and by his vexation that they had outmaneuvered Russia in trade relations with China. The British Foreign Office, backed by the navy, had forced the Chinese to open five ports to British ships and cargoes. What a calamity if the British should sail up the Amur out of the Pacific Ocean and take possession of its headwaters!

Ivan the Terrible had his Yermak, and he, Nicholas, needed

a leader of the same spirit. He believed he had found him in Muraviov.

The inspirited Muraviov at once selected as his marine scout Captain Nevelskoy, commander of the brig *Baikal*, which was designed for patrol duty on the coast of Kamchatka.

Governor now of the territory stretching from the Yenisei River to Bering Strait, Muraviov took up his residence in Irkutsk.

Would Petropavlofsk, port of Kamchatka, be a possible location for a Russian naval base? The Czar had asked him this, and he had promised an answer. Though the voyage to that port was long and difficult—no governor-general had ever before attempted it!—Muraviov journeyed there. His predecessors had informed the Czar that Petropavlofsk was a town of no importance, but the new official asked himself: "Why has that harbor and its waters attracted fleets of American whalers?"

He arrived at Petropavlofsk toward the last of July, weary of a troubled voyage of two months. The weather was fine; the sea was bland under the brief, fierce sun. Avacha Bay with its many inlets lay serene under the protection of mauve volcanic mountains, and the voyager declared that no harbor could be more picturesque. In his letters home he affirmed that it was a strong and safe base for the naval ships of Russia.

Nevelskoy patiently told the official landlubber that it was often ice-bound, and that it would be better to find a port farther down the coast, but Muraviov said that Russia, with its fleet, was not yet ready to enter into disputes with Great Britain and other powers in the warmer waters of the Pacific. If the Crown could obtain control of the lower waters of the Amur, there might be a good harbor available there, but that had yet to be determined.

Nevelskoy went down and explored the mouth of the Amur. Returning, and sighting Muraviov on the deck of the ship that was searching for the *Baikal*, he seized the speaking-trumpet and gave way to emotions:

"God has assisted us . . . the main question is happily solved. Saghalien, at the mouth of the Amur, is an island—ships can pass out of the Amur both north and south. From the Gulf of Tartar,

where the water, thanks be to God, is never frozen, ships drawing 15 feet could go in or out."

Muraviov wrote to the Czar:

"Our destiny is down the Amur and into the Pacific. The English, by forcing trade concessions with China, are drying up our overland trade, and the merchants of Kiakhtha will starve. Our settlements on the Pacific must be fostered."

The Chinese subjects—the Ghiliacks—among whom Captain Nevelskoy had built a trading-station, were ignorant of Russian ambitions and made no outcry when the Russian-American Company's vessel, the *Shelikov*, joined the noted *Baikal*. The crews and the garrison spent the severe winter at the post, having provided for themselves the comfort of a Russian bath-house primitively provided with means of steaming frozen bodies.

The Amur, sweeping to the north, passing the 51st parallel, approaches the shores of the Gulf of Tartary; therefore the Russian officers decided that they must also have command of the Gulf of Tartary and its lakes and bays. They seized the bay of De Castries, and spacious Lake Kizi. A harbor situated on the south route to the Korean frontier had been taken and named Imperatorski Bay.

The next big step was the seizing of the island of Saghalien, a natural fortress which lies before the mouth of the Amur. The transports *Nikolai* and *Irtysk* brought garrisons and supplies.

These quick gains of strategic situations were made possible by Chinese sleepiness. The Chinese were only interested in the middle course of the river, which flows through a warm and pleasant zone. The country about the headwaters was often bleak, and the Amur as it neared the ocean turned north into less desirable lands, so the khans and mandarins clung to the most pleasant part of the river, and neglected the rest of it. But the Russian race, pushed up into the north, had become used to occupying less desirable regions, so that from them they could penetrate fairer countries.

The Russian officers advancing by degrees up the Amur were gentle in their dealings with the docile tribes. As gentlemen of

the navy, they hoped to cancel the cruelties of the seventeenth-century Cossacks. Liberal and polite in their purchases and barter, they were the most gracious men that ever snatched Chinese territory.

Every advance Muraviov made created a storm in St. Petersburg. Vice-Admiral Putiatin, who had been given by Nesselrode a commission to negotiate for commercial rights with Japan, declared:

"Our occupation of Saghalien will create difficulties with Japan. She claims sovereignty over the island."

But Nicholas wetted his lips and craved for more such news from Muraviov.

Warning that war with France and England was imminent, Nesselrode demanded that Muraviov be summoned to explain how the Russian settlements in the Pacific could be defended. The unabashed Governor-General countered with a proposal that Russia intrench herself by seizing all of China. Upon the timid Foreign Office he turned thunderous guns. Had not the Russian-American Company urged long ago that Russia occupy California, before it was claimed by the United States? The bureaucrats had said then that such a danger would not arise for a century, but how quickly the United States had acted. The British could be as quick in seizing the Amur—and China.

Muraviov made it clear that he was not regretting the loss of California to the Russian empire. He admitted that the occupation of California could have been only temporary; that the United States was destined to rule the entire continent, including Alaska. His ambition was fixed upon finding a shortcut to the Chinese and Japanese empires. Russia's field, he asserted, was to rule the warmer Pacific shores, and to do this the broad Amur waterway must be Russian.

As to Russian expansion across Bering Strait, what was the need of it? Why come in conflict there with the British and the Americans, when down the shorter, easier way of the Amur lay the markets of China and Japan? If the British recognized China as worth grabbing, Russia should be in at the kill.

A strange thing was happening. One man, the Governor-Gen-

eral, was changing the long-pursued course of his race toward America. It was as if the vanguard of an immense people headed toward the foggy Pacific, and across icy straits, were suddenly diverted in its march by the sight of a broad sunny river fringed by amber fields and delightful orchards.

It was as if the long line of Russians, Cossacks, Tartars, and native camp-followers were halted and turned aside by the sight of an orange-clad piper crowned by a silk skullcap tipped by a beckoning peacock feather surmounted by a crystal ball.

The piper's slanting eyes were soft and inviting, and the tune he played suggested a soft life among sages, a pleasant opiate existence.

Having brought them to a pause, he turned his sandaled feet down the River of the Black Dragon, and his toes quivered to lead the march. Time has yet to show whether the journey Muraviov led was a fortunate or unhappy one.

Nicholas again supported Muraviov against the Foreign Office, and sanctioned the occupation of the protested harbors. In a conference held in his presence, the Czar studied certain maps the Governor-General had brought with him, and noted the proposed new boundaries. Pointing to an Amur stretch between Bureya River and the Pacific Ocean, he said: "So this should be ours!"

His words fell into pools of army and naval silence, but Muraviov said yes.

Nicholas turned to the Minister of War:

"We must arrange about this with the Chinese."

The Emperor then examined the Governor-General's map of the Amur.

"All this is very fine," he said, "but consider that I must defend it from Cronstadt [a fortified seaport on the Gulf of Finland]."

Muraviov put his forefinger on the map and traced the course of the Amur up to Transbaikalia.

"It is not necessary to go so far, Sire; it can be defended much nearer."

Nicholas put his hand affectionately—and encouragingly—on the aggressive official's head.

"Oh, Muraviov," he said, dissembling, "really some day you will lose your wits with the Amur."

The Governor-General straightened himself and spoke solemnly: "Sire, events point out this route!"

The Emperor's hand dropped to Muraviov's shoulder. "Well, let us wait until events lead us thither."

The events were hurrying, and came to a head a year later.

The prescient Muraviov went away for a vacation, and while he was gone the Asiatic Department of the Foreign Office began blunderingly to treat with the Chinese government about acquiring the Amur region between the Bureya River and the sea. The despatch the department sent to Peking, revealing Russia's aims, was contrary to Muraviov's crafty plan to occupy the Amur by degrees, and then to say to the Chinese, "What about it?"

He saw that the Chinese, whose chief defense was their sagacity, could re-create a treaty barrier, again shutting Russia out of the Amur, and he decided to act before the envoys met.

The fateful year of 1854, when Russia went to war with Turkey and England, and when France and Sardinia arrayed themselves against the Slavs, brought Muraviov his opportunity. The navies of France and England were threatening Kamchatka, and it was feared that they might seize the Russian stations at the mouth of the Amur. This done, they could come up the river and take over the immensity of Eastern Siberia, which, to Muraviov's mind, would be a worse disaster than the severest defeat in Europe. He resolved to seize the Amur.

The merchant Kuznetzov, who had made a fortune in gold-washing, contributed 100,000 roubles to build the Governor-General an invading vessel, the pioneer steamer *Argun*. The merchants of Irkutsk, foreseeing profits, held a celebration and made substantial contributions to the voyage.

The Governor-General assembled a fleet on the Shilka, which flows into the Amur. At a banquet on shore, amidst fireworks, he was hailed the accomplisher of the dreams of Peter the Great. An old image of the Blessed Virgin which had been brought out of Albazin when the Russians relinquished it, was taken aboard the steamer to bless the voyage.



A line battalion of 800 soldiers; a company of Cossacks; a division of mountain artillery; the steamer *Argun* leading a flotilla of 75 laden barges and rafts—this was the invading force.

A band played *God Save the Czar*; the soldiers crossed themselves and cheered, and the expedition voyaged down across the line and entered the forbidden territory.

As the flotilla passed the site of Albazin, sacred in Cossack history, the soldiers sang hymns, and the Governor-General went ashore and knelt dramatically at shrines where bands of pioneer warriors had fought with the same aim—to wrest Chinese territory.

Fourteen days after the start, the expedition reached the mouth of the Zeya, a short distance from the Chinese fortified town of Aigun. There Muraviov politely sent officers to inquire if its governor had received word from Peking that he was coming to explore.

The agitated governor had received no message, and was in a dreadful quandary. Awed by the sight of the smoke-puffing steamer—a veritable water-dragon—and by its tail of barges and rafts, he said weakly that it was impossible to permit the expedition to pass. Having uttered this, he retired to prepare his excuses for the Chinese court, summoning witnesses and gathering testimony as to the irresistibility of the Russians.

In a little more than a month, the expedition peacefully completed its stupendous mission.

The storm over Europe was spreading to the Pacific. The few scattered posts at the mouth of the Amur must have their garrisons increased, their locations fortified.

Fortunate it was for Muraviov's career that the detachment he had sent to Kamchatka by way of the Amur arrived in time to give valiant support to Petropavlofsk in its successful defense against the Anglo-French squadron. It was Russia's most brilliant victory of the war. The disastrous campaign in the Black Sea region had been offset by the victory in the Pacific.

He was a national hero, a new Yermak. It was good for him and his plans for Eastern Siberia that he had won this fresh prestige, because there was a new Czar in St. Petersburg. The iron-

willed Emperor Nicholas had passed and his son Alexander had succeeded him.

The situation in China had become more complicated. The government there was weak as water and the English and French were going in. They had sent diplomatic residents to the Chinese court, supported by strong fleets. Admiral Putiatin was leaving to represent Russia. Remembering that the Admiral had supported Nesselrode in his protests against taking the Amur, Muraviov hoped to bring Putiatin to his side.

The closer the mariner came to the scene of controversy, the more ardent he became in support of Muraviov. At Irkutsk, on his way to Peking, he decided to travel by way of Mongolia, but the mandarins of whom he asked passageway infuriated him by their usual excuses and delays.

"This we will do," avowed the Admiral. "We will seize Aigun and hold it until permission comes from Peking for us to travel the way we choose!"

"Do not let us," the amused Muraviov advised, "go contrary to the Russian policy of patient, peaceful entrance without unnecessary violence."

In the spring of 1858, when the Chinese government was engaged with rebels, and with the diplomats and navies of France and England, Muraviov made his great diplomatic move, forcing the Chinese officials to come and confer about new boundaries. He had persuaded the friendly Alexander to appoint him head of the embassy.

The conference was held at Aigun, a favorable spot for the Russians, because they could anchor two gunboats in the Amur with the cannon pointing at the residence of the governor. There were several long meetings, but at last Muraviov came to the end of his patience.

"You have insulted the Russian flag and your people have plundered our merchants."

Prince Y-Shan, the Chinese plenipotentiary, promised to boil in oil the offending subjects.

Muraviov was unresponsive.

"We will also boil their wives and children!"

Muraviov shook his head.

The Chinese prince, remembering the historic ruse at Nertchinsk, mentioned that 300,000 trained troops were stationed along the Amur; the Russian Governor-General countered with a half-million, and played upon the Chinese fear of further seizures by the British.

"If the Amur became the frontier boundary between Russia and China, the British would not dare to come up it. It would remain a Chinese river even if Russia possessed and settled the left bank. Come, we are a neighborly race, and our only wish is to trade with you and support you against your enemies."

Prince Y-Shan yielded.

A solemn religious service was held—Archbishop Innocent celebrating—at the new town built on Khabarov's old site—now named Blagoveschensk (Annunciation). Before the soldiers entered the church, they paused for an oration by Muraviov:

"Comrades, I congratulate you. We have not labored in vain; the Amur now belongs to Russia. The prayers of the Holy Orthodox Church and the thanks of the Emperor are for you. Long live Emperor Alexander II, and may the newly acquired country flourish under his protection! Hurrah!"

The delighted Czar gave Muraviov the title Count Amurski.

Watching China yield more and more under foreign pressure, Muraviov grabbed more territory, taking over the fertile region of the Ussuri River, and planning to plant there villages of Cossacks whose wants would be supplied by light-draught steamers. These Cossacks, forced to travel far to lonely new habitations, were to flourish in the new region. Living on cabbage soup, black bread, dried fish, and weak tea, they came to be admired by travelers for their bigness, powerful shoulders, deep chests, and sturdy legs. Russia had planted men of iron upon her new borders.

Muraviov's voyage down the Japanese coast was immensely fruitful for Russia. Sailing up into the gulf to the north of the Japanese Sea, which washes the shores of Korea, he decided that it should belong to the empire and named it Bay of Peter the Great, thus selecting the locality where the future Russian naval

power should center. Possessing the Amur and the Pacific sea-coast down to Korea, Russia might well consider that the dream of Peter the Great had been achieved.

Completed indeed was the work of Yermak, but as the imaginative Muraviov stood on a hill and looked at the whale's head of land which lies across the sea from Japan, and north of projecting Korea, he saw that the shore receded beside the whale's head, making an excellent harbor. Envisioning this harbor—the later Vladivostok—as Russia's principal seaport on the Pacific, a Gibraltar at the East, he felt that it was unwise to hold that region of the Ussuri jointly with China, as was then the case. A final touch of magnificent strategy was needed. Calling for a map, he colored the Ussuri region in the same color as Siberia, and sent it to the duped but unprotesting Chinese government.

His friends in Russia, now that Muraviov had been named Count Amurski for his conquest of the Amur, gave him with amusing prophecy a new title—Count Pekingski.

This Russian Clive by opening the new path to the Pacific gave the first intimations to the United States that the approaching crisis in Russian and American relations would be avoided. Glad enough to use the device of the Russian-American Company's trading-posts to penetrate the Amur country, he saw that the Company's game was up in Alaska, and that the United States would never permit it to expand past her coasts toward the sunny lands the crown coveted. He recommended that, under favorable conditions, Russia's possessions in America be ceded to the United States.

Having fulfilled the dreams of Peter, Catherine, and Nicholas, and planted Russian banners in the golden south, what need to bother about colonies in the icy regions of America. Russia had more than enough of Arctic acres.

"Let us limit our activities to the old continent," he advised. "The ocean bars our further expansion eastward. That is the way for our expansion. It is there that we need to counterbalance what the other powers acquire."

Willing to surrender American territory, he developed an eager-

ness to use American talents and capital in civilizing Eastern Siberia.

Looking ahead, we find the amazing Muraviov working to kill the discomforts of travel between old Russia and the Pacific, and inviting Americans to come through the Pacific door the early czars had barred, to aid in Siberia's development.

He created steamboat travel, and encouraged Colonel Romanov in his plan for a carriage road to be converted later into a railway. He also submitted to his government a plan for a horse railway, convertible into a steam railroad, from Nizhni-Novgorod to the Pacific. Moreover, he favored the project of the breezy American Collins, whom we introduce in the next chapter, for a railway line from Irkutsk to Chita, on the upper waters of the Amur, and he improved the postal road that was to become the track of the trans-Siberian railway.

Imperialism has its tides, surging and ebbing with the virility of rulers and the greed of nations. Russia had its flow and ebb too. A number of years after Muraviov's triumph, Baron Korff came to be Governor-General to the lonely people in the immense regions of the Amur. He opened his first speech to the local notables with these words to warn them from expecting the crown of his day to support further ideas of aggression: "Power lies in love, not in force."

The responsive Amur dwellers inscribed these words on a tablet companioning one containing the imperialistic phrases of the exultant Count of the Amur.

## CHAPTER XXIII

TODAY THERE is fresh conversation about old Siberian-American projects . . . talk about extending the motorcar highway to Alaska across the Strait to Siberia, with a spur running to the wharves of the Amur.

Almost a century ago, with schemes that foreshadowed the ambitious modern one, a brisk American traveled by back-breaking wagon and sledge to propose to the Russian court that Yankee ingenuity and dollars be used to make a road from the nearest

Siberian cities to the Amur, and to give to the river the blessings of American steamboats.

The gold rush had brought Perry McDonough Collins to the crest of the wave in California, but he was smelling fresh fortunes in Siberia, and was fascinated by the reports that had been brought in by whalers as to the activities of the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia.

"I can do business with him," Collins said, and this conviction was enough to send him forth on his incredible journey. A romantic financier, living life to the hilt in the San Francisco of 1855, Collins persuaded himself that it was better to write American history in Siberia than to read in the newlyfounded *Bulletin* about gamblers, killers, and the hangings of the Vigilance Committee. Arming himself with official recommendations and letters of credit, and confident of his personal equipment of cheek, social grace, and conviviality, he set out on the long road to do business with Muraviov, Count Amurski.

The Russian ambassador at Washington was quite willing that our ambitious capitalist should travel across Russia and through mysterious Siberia under official auspices, but warned him of the risk of being jolted to death in crude conveyances. So willing, indeed, was the ambassador that he agreed with President Pierce that Collins should be given the prestige of the office of Commercial Agent of the United States on the Amur.

Proud of the commission, Collins went to London, to St. Petersburg, across the Urals, and on and on to Kiakhta on the Russian side of the Chinese border. He arrived bruised in body but with a spirit as fresh as a California poppy, and was fortunate enough to arrive at the time the merchants of the town were giving a banquet to Count Amurski.

An American in Siberia? To the Siberians, America existed in legend rather than reality. It was true that one of the few scholars among them might quote the lines of Mikhail Lomonosov:

"Russian Columbuses, scorning sullen fate,  
Through the ice will open a new way to the East,  
And our power will reach as far as America."

And the same scholar might also recite Denis Fonvizin's lines:

"Oh, unshakable warrior,  
Thou art and wert unconquerable,  
Thy guide to freedom, Washington!"

But real Americans were as scarce as Crown Princes. John Ledyard, protégé of Thomas Jefferson, and skipper John De Wolfe, were the only Yankees in the memory of their fathers and themselves.

The merchants in the banquet hall drank a bumper to Collins, the curious man from California, and called for a speech. Under the exhilaration of the champagne, the Commercial Agent orated:

"Gentlemen-merchants: You have done well in drinking the health of Lieutenant-General Muraviov, and with your permission I cannot refrain from saying a few words." (Clapping and cries of *Horoshol! Horoshol! Good! Good!*)

"In opening up Siberia to the commerce of the world, through the magnificent River Amur, whose headwaters drain yonder snow-clad mountains, he has done more for your country than any of his predecessors!"

With permission to journey down the Amur, Collins embarked with a Russian military party. He had already noted in his strenuous travels across European Russia and Siberia that the road was marked by the checkered sentry-boxes and striped gate-bars of the Czar's troops, and as they voyaged down past the frontier village of Gorbitza, crossing the boundary-line, he saw the last of these little outposts. As it vanished, his Russian companions became emotional:

"We have left the Northern Bear! We have passed through the eastern gate of the mighty Muscovite empire! We are entering the Land of Flowers—the Central Kingdom!"

Our American traveler was reminded of beautiful landscapes and vistas he had seen on the Ohio River. The country was well wooded. Listen to the exuberant fellow:

"I had not been the first to discover this river, neither was I the first white man, like de Soto on the banks of the Mississippi, but I was the first Yankee who had seen it . . ."

And hear his rhetorical flight aboard the barge as two rivers unite to form the Amur:

"Turning on your heel you see the Shilka and the Argun flowing joyfully on to meet in that conjugal embrace from which springs a mighty river!"

Collins humanly tells of meeting native canoes, with Tartars wearing Chinese hats and smoking Chinese pipes; of seeing other boatmen that had the faces of Mongols and wore pigtailed. These natives brought caviar from the large sturgeon abundant on the Amur, and bartered it for Russian blue cloth. At night, Tartar campfires flared along the shore, and the sturgeon-fishers in the tents shouted to the Russian flotilla, but received no reply.

Among so much gold braid, our Commercial Agent appeared inglorious, and his lack of adornments made him an object of pity among the Russian officers. When the vessel arrived at Aigun, where Muraviov had overawed the Manchu governor, the commander appeared in full-dress with sword and gold epaulets, and his staff dressed as grandly. Gathering around the unadorned American, they tried to persuade him to live up to their ideas of how an American official should be dressed by offering him a pair of revolvers to strap on over his coat, a bowie knife, and the captain's massive gold watch and chain.

Politely, he refused, but when the governor received them in his richly figured silken robes, wearing the cap adorned by a peacock feather surmounted by a crystal ball, Collins understood why his simple dress offended his Russian hosts and the Manchu official.

His flashing spirit, however, triumphed over his garb, and having an eye for the women, and seeing a group of them picturesquely costumed, he went toward them, but was driven back by a sentry. He made note that "the females stood their ground bravely, and seemed not the least disconcerted at my approach. I was, however, near enough to become satisfied that they are not without some traces of beauty."

It being the month of June, the Tartar belles along the shore had dressed themselves in glinting fishskin, which garments, besides shedding rain, were light and pliable, and sometimes quite becoming in style and finish. They appeared, we imagine, not



unlike the girls of today who in rainy weather swish through the shopping streets in filmy, transparent robes.

The Californian, devoting his attention to the feminine side of river life, yet cautiously noted in his journal that when he entered a house or tent it was "to observe their household economy." His studies in this science produced these observations:

"I observed a young woman with many ornaments in her ears, having her hair carefully dressed with ornamented hairpins thrust through it. The hair was brought on the back part of the head in a large knot. She also had a dress of Chinese cotton cloth, worked with embroidery at the edge of the skirt. Her complexion was a deep brownish red, with full cheeks and fine teeth. She was busy cleaning fish, and was at first inclined to be offended at my close scrutiny of her personal ornaments, but a friendly squaw came up, and after some conversation she seemed inclined to be on more friendly terms. . . .

"We saw here a native girl, whose appearance struck us with admiration and astonishment. She was from sixteen to eighteen years old, and was exceedingly beautiful.

"As we entered the house, she was standing in the shade of rather a dark room, which was only lighted by the open door, and we only got to see her in a favorable light as she passed out of the door and across the yards, to an outbuilding. We were endeavoring to procure fresh caviar, but were failing to make the man understand, when the girl returned into the house.

"She seemed at once to comprehend the word *rebah*—Russian for fish. She led us across the open space to the storehouse.

"Her arms were bare to the shoulders, and beautifully formed, and she wore only a very light single chemise or kalat, tucked up on one side under her girdle, which gave her limbs free motion. Her head thrown back, with a light elastic step that would grace Diana, she hastened to the storeroom. When in the room she stood with one hand clasping a beam overhead, and occasionally showing a pearly set of teeth, in trying to make us understand the names and uses of the various articles stored therein.

"These were dried fish, caviar, sturgeons' entrails, dried herbs, skins of various kinds, seeds and grain, with an indescribable

medley of half-savage, half-Tartar gear, with implements of the chase, nets, and fishing spears. But we were now less interested concerning caviar, and more than interested in our Goldee belle, who was indeed a jewel for which barbaric princes would have given thousands, or have shared a throne to possess, and which made the civilized wanderer from far distant lands wish that she could have been transplanted to a more genial soil, where cultivation and art could have developed, perhaps, a mind more than equal to the charms and graces of her person."

It will be observed that the student of household economy had become Wordsworthian after his study of the native belle, but his poetic deductions can well be disputed. Many travelers have found that the girls of these tribes do not need developed minds to enjoy themselves or delight a man.

Spy-boats—it was long before the Russians got clear of them. Such a boat contained, besides the rowers, an officer and two attendants. The craft's insignia—a white ball—became the American's nickname for the tracker, whose chief business was to warn the natives not to have traffic with the Russians.

Wherever they went ashore, White Ball landed also, spread his mat, crossed his legs, lit his pipe, and began watching what went on.

"A few silver roubles and pieces of blue cotton cloth were shown him, in order to see what effect they would have on his propensity to dog our trail, but he very politely declined any substantial present, and pointing to his own and to the captain's breast, and shaking his long and bony forefinger, he tried to convey to us the idea that his honor would not permit him to receive presents, or be blind to his duty."

As a preventor of romantic incidents, White Ball was very annoying in his allegiance to duty. There were the Mongol girls, for instance:

"These girls were evidently sisters, very much alike, and possibly twins. They had small delicate hands, and fine teeth. Their color was red, to be sure; yet the color of the peach-bloom was in their cheeks, and they were very sprightly, and well formed. Being of Mongol blood, their hair and eyes were black.

"We were getting on very good terms with our friends . . . but at this juncture up came the two satellites of White Ball, and drove the girls into the house, to which they retreated very reluctantly."

We here take leave of the engaging man from California, but he will bob up again in an approaching chapter as the agent in Russia for an American group proposing to join the United States to Europe by a costly and difficult telegraph line through British Columbia and Siberia.

## THE SWORD RATTLES BUT THE GRIP WEAKENS

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### CHAPTER XXIV

THE RUSSIAN COURT had had enough of lowly-born, commercially-minded managers. It had become known to rival nations that the Russian-American Company was a tool of empire, so why not give the colonies some of the aristocratic color of Russia itself?

Naval captains had long complained that the trading-posts were a disgrace to the empire, so why not appoint naval officers as governors, and permit them to carry out the improvements and reforms they had in mind?

This policy was adopted, and the march of naval governors began. They were educated men of good intentions, and they improved the comforts and appearances of the colonies, but they knew nothing about business and they increased the expense of supporting the settlements from 676,000 roubles to 1,219,000. For the little business to be done, 500 naval officers, of high and low rank, with their families and servants, came to live at Sitka.

Their presence there was a pathetic sign of Russia's frustration at sea. To borrow a present-day colloquialism, they were all dressed up with no place to go. Czar Alexander, however, gave

them a thrill by rattling the sword in Napoleonic fashion, but nothing came of it except trouble with the United States.

In renewing the charter of the Company in 1821, he issued a ukase restricting all the trade of the Alaskan coast to Russian subjects, and his sloops-of-war seized certain flouting American sealers and whalers.

Uncle Sam was up in arms at this, and an agreement was wrenched from the Czar fixing the southern boundary of the Russian possessions at 54° 40' N—the latitude of Fort Simpson. Great Britain seized the opportunity to obtain the same kind of treaty. Instead of strengthening the Company by the ukase, the Emperor weakened it, and the directors made polite complaint that the treaties gave rights of trade to the Americans and British which the Company had owned exclusively. It was discouraging to the colonizers: whenever the American-British pincers closed, the Czars yielded.

As to this usually undramatic march of governors, we will concern ourselves chiefly with highlighting the administrations of Baron Wrangell (1830-1835) and Adolf Etolin (1840-1845).

Dismal reports of foreign visitors to the settlements are suddenly lighted by accounts of the beauty and culture of governors' wives. For instance, Sir George Simpson, Governor-in-chief of Hudson's Bay Company, said of Lady Etolin, referring to her birthplace, Helsingfors, Finland:

"This pretty and ladylike woman had come to a secluded spot from the far extremity of the empire."

A governor's lady just as gallant and highly esteemed was the wife of Kupreanov. When Sir Edward Belcher, in the ship *Sulphur*, was a guest at Baranov Castle, his enthusiasm expressed itself so:

"The society [of Sitka] is indebted principally to the Governor's elegant and accomplished lady, who is one of the first of Russian families, for much of this polish. She journeyed across Siberia with him, on horseback or mules, enduring great hardships in a most critical moment [Sir Edward was probably squeamish about saying she was with child!] in order to share with him the privations of this forlorn region."

Of the other women at the party, Sir Edward politely commented: "The ladies, although self-taught, acquitted themselves with all the ease and elegance communicated by European instructors."

To relieve the monotony and gloom, summer picnic parties into the mountains were made a custom; a bit of seacoast became a promenade; cards, dinners, and dances were nightly entertainments, and a fairly rich library was maintained.

Holy days were welcomed with excessive joy at Sitka for the opportunity they gave to break the gloom of the environment. The coming of Easter was especially hailed. After the long solemn service on Good Friday, when the priest proclaimed, "Christ is risen!" the crowd that had fasted went home to feast, and then in gala dress went through the town carrying the gilded, hard-boiled eggs that were to be presents to their friends, whom they would greet convivially with the blessed words, "Christ is risen!"

The march of naval governors brought social and business reforms: uniforms—so that the employes would not appear to be pirates when distinguished visitors came; retirement with small pensions for the veterans; a pleasant clubhouse for the unmarried officials; physicians, and sanitary measures.

Having no place to go southward, the naval governors turned toward the unexplored north, and tried to conceal the hurt to their pride that these voyages were mainly useful as openers of new fur-bearing regions, and that their proud ships were in the trade.

Governor Chisiakov (1825-1830) sent creole Alexander Kolmanov up to Bristol Bay, 380 miles to the northeast from Unalaska, and this region became a center for hunting and trading. The creole explorer founded the trading-post of Alexandrovsky among the numerous Innuít people, the Eskimos of Alaska. The village that grew there became known as Nooshagak, taking the same name as that of the river which poured past it to the sea.

The village rose in terraces from the river's edge, and around the typical church, the house of the priest, and the trading stores, the depending Innuits built their log huts. The Innuits were nomadic, and followed the river for salmon, and the mountain

streams to trap martens, shoot deer and bears, and hunt beaver. During the winter they loafed and danced, and the artistic among them made carvings of walrus ivory.

When Etolin became governor, he sent Lieutenant Zagoskin, a skilled engineer, to chart this region. He spent several interesting years among the Innuits.

The Yukon, the Mississippi of Alaska, came partly under Russian control in 1833, when Glazanov led his band of hunters along its banks and founded Nulato. Between 1842 and 1845, Lieutenant Zagoskin made his exploration up the river, charting a course for the first Americans who came in 1865. Two years later, Lieutenant Tebenkov founded Fort St. Michael on the Yukon, which became the most important post in the Alaskan North, because it gathered the accumulated furs of all the trappers and traders of the Upper and Lower Yukon. Around its warehouses camped hundreds of Eskimos and Indians who had come hundreds of miles to trade there. The village Michaelovsky, with its red-painted church and yellow houses, took on a quaint charm in the arctic landscape as its colored buildings blended with the auroral display, or gathered flashing flocks of barn swallows, or harmonized with the gay flowers the gentler season brought.

In 1839, the Russian explorers crossed Bering Sea and entered the huge funnel-like mouth of the Kuskokwim River, which is in relation to the Yukon River as is the Ohio to the Mississippi. The worst hardship the white men endured were the mosquitoes, whose swarms were the most ferocious in Alaska. The only protection against them was the native one of covering the body with rancid oil.

In his administration, Baron Wrangell again distinguished himself as an explorer, and encouraged the creoles of the colony to explore, using especially Andrei Glazanov, who had proved himself able as a discoverer. Glazanov used nautical instruments well, and was familiar with the dialects of the country he penetrated—the land between Bristol Bay and Norton Sound. After long, agonized journeys across the ice and through mountains, he re-

turned with full knowledge of the people and the topography of the Lower Yukon River and its delta.

A man gentle and understanding, when he came to a village whose people were suspicious, he entered their council-house and by persuasive speech and gifts of tobacco won their friendship. Having heard of the blessings of Christian baptism, they asked him to baptize them, but this he could not do.

Ardent Russian that he was, Wrangell stiffened the backbone of his men in their skirmishes with the colossal rival in the south, the Hudson's Bay Company. Both the British and the Russian governments were watching the battles of their commercial protagonists, ready to raise the flag of empire on shores they won. And farther south, committed to no company's fortunes, the American government was watching also.

The historic clash between the two great fur companies occurred on the disputed Stikine River.

Busy extending its holdings over the northwest, the British company had crossed territory recognized as Russian, to found posts on the upper waters of the Stikine, whose rich fur resources extended as far back as the Rocky Mountains.

When Chief Trader Ogden, of the Hudson's Bay Company, reached the Stikine in the brig *Dryad*, he found that his attempt to steal a march had been anticipated, and that Lieutenant Zarembo of Baron Wrangell's staff had arrived before him and had built a fort controlling the river's mouth.

A warning gun fired from the fort brought the *Dryad* about, and Zarembo rowed out to warn Ogden away.

"But," Ogden protested, "the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1825 provides free navigation of streams crossing Russian territory in their course from British land to the sea!"

"That clause will soon be canceled. You cannot use it as an excuse to take Russian territory."

"It is in the treaty. I shall anchor here and send a protest to your superior."

Thereupon, Ogden sent a messenger to Sitka, but failed here too. In Wrangell's absence, Assistant Manager Etolin firmly sup-



ported Zarembo, and sent vessels to back him. The answer Ogden received was this:

"If you desire to save yourselves, your property, and your vessel, you must weigh anchor at once and leave these waters."

Threatening vengeance, Ogden sailed for Fort Vancouver, while Zarembo completed the fort and raised the Russian flag above it.

But, as may be guessed, the matter was not ended. A claim for 22,150 pounds sterling was made to the Russian government by the British ambassador for losses incurred in the defeated expedition. In the agreement which followed the damage claims were waived in consideration of a lease of ten years to the British company of the coastline from Portland Canal to Cape Spencer, provided that grains and meats be delivered from Vancouver to the Russian colonies. Gaining a source of food supplies nearer than Fort Ross, Russia had put herself into a position to abandon that station. The prestige she lost by this treaty was the first quivering of the ebbtide of Slavic expansion.

The whims of the directors having changed back to selecting a manager of experience, Captain Adolf Etolin, twenty-three years in the Company's service, and assistant manager under Wrangell, was appointed governor. Under him the Company was very prosperous, but his name lives chiefly because he was one of the great explorers of the early nineteenth century.

Forty-two years after his appointment as governor in 1840, this hickorynut of a man surveyed the coast from Bristol Bay to Cape Newenham. For close to a century thereafter, his charts were depended upon by mariners along this foggy and ragged coast.

He gave the Kolosh jobs as workmen and sailors, and expanded the Indian market at Sitka into a fair modeled after the dramatic fair at Nizhni-Novgorod, to which from immemorial times traders came from regions as remote as the Black Sea and Mongolia.

This new Alaskan fair drew many tribesmen from southeastern Alaska, and they were free to trade in open market their pelts of beaver, mink, marten, and sea-otter. No Russian official objected to this departure—did not the barterers spend the money they received in the Company's stores?

Under Etolin, the shipyard had kept strides with steam-power, and built the tug *Muir* with eight horsepower, and the steamer *Nikolai* with sixty. Alas for Russian pride, the machinery-minded Yankees must be depended upon: the boilers came from Boston.

Because liquor was the cause of a brawl at Fort Stikine in which the innocent commander was killed, Simpson and Etolin agreed for their companies to stop the sale of it north of 50°.

Most of the Russians considered liquor as essential as food, and were infuriated at the prohibition. The glass had become their escape from a miserable existence. Etolin tried to make amends by building a clubhouse that became the living-room, library, and game-room for unmarried officers. They were permitted to entertain there visiting Yankee skippers, and it is not found in history that Etolin patrolled the capacious blouses and pockets of the skippers.

In 1839, after commissioners from the Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian-American Company had come to terms of agreement at their meeting in London, it became the duty of Dr. McLoughlin to man the trading-posts the Company would occupy on the "Russian strip," the stretch of coast the British were leasing from the Muscovites.

In the little ship *Beaver*, James Douglas, chief aide to McLoughlin, set out for Sitka. A canny man was Douglas, a man designed for knighthood and for the office of first governor of British-Columbia. After his lessons in economy under McLoughlin, he was disgusted at the wastefulness he saw at Sitka under the regime of the Russian navy.

Governor Etolin had just brought over from Finland his gracious blonde bride, and was in a mood to give splendid dinners and dances at which his lovely little wife presided like a fairy queen suddenly appearing in a barbaric setting. Enjoying the caviar, French champagne, and Spanish raisins, Douglas kept his head clear enough to observe that the place was crowded with idle naval officers and crews, and he learned that their pay came from both the government and the Company. He counted more than a dozen vessels doing nothing, and commented that a ship or crew without work was never seen around Fort Vancouver.

When he left Sitka to take over Fort Stikine, and led nineteen men from the *Beaver* to the fort's gate, the Russian commander was amazed at the littleness of the company.

"We have fifty men here," he said.

"Our garrisons are twenty men," the Hudson's Bay official told him.

Etolin watched mournfully the Yankee whalers, sealers, and land prospectors coming in increasing numbers up the coast.

British Columbia, lying between, was also to feel this northern push of the insatiate Americans. Later, when James Douglas was appointed acting governor of Vancouver Island, he proposed to the British government that something be done to stop the drifters from the California goldfields.

Free men, he said, were pouring into British territory. They were the type of men who took the law into their own hands. They might become formidable by mere force of numbers. He had heard on good authority that the Americans in Oregon were discussing a scheme to colonize Vancouver Island and found an independent government there.

Her Majesty's government took no action. The British crown and the Russian crown were alike in concluding that they could no longer win and hold provinces through trading companies. Great Britain, however, sent engineers and surveyors to plan cities on Vancouver and Queen Charlotte Islands, hopeful of a flow of English settlers.

The few people in the British provinces on the Pacific were little concerned with the threat of the Americans' northwest push. They had no roots as colonists, because they were just employes, and their government was more interested in the Company than in them.

With so much at stake for the future, Canada was indifferent too. Yes, its leaders agreed, the British fleet should have a base in the north Pacific, but the Dominion should not be forced to pay the cost of it, or to support its garrison.

Bitterness was to grow in northwest Canada as its industrialists saw the American overland trail turn up the coast and come to

an end in a region which, they asserted, should have been acquired by Great Britain.

The sale of Alaska to the United States cut off part of the Dominion from its natural ocean boundary, the Pacific. From that northern part, it would be necessary for her roads and goods to cross United States land to get to the sea; and the same agreement had deprived Canada of fishery rights of enormous value. The only comfort in the situation was that Canadians and Americans could get along with each other.

Compared with conditions in the north, life was idyllic at Fort Ross.

A quadrangular stockade of redwood enclosed the officers' quarters, the barracks, the chapel, the storehouses and barns. On the beach below the bluff, shelters for shipments sprawled, and there was the luxury of a bath-house, Russian style. A hundred Russians and some eighty Aleuts were in the original party.

Life at first had been no easier than it was at Sitka, because Kuskov could not bring enough food supplies with him, and the Spanish officers and people, seeing fears come true, held aloof. However, Kuskov was a man to inspire trust, and he had been provided with funds to pay for what he wanted, so in time the Ross colony obtained sufficient grain, vegetables, and cattle to take care of its own needs and to supply the Alaskan stations.

The grapevines that were later brought from Lima, and the apple, pear, and cherry trees, did not begin to bear until five years after the start; and cattle-raising was always a problem, because roving Indians and wild beasts killed straying cattle. The vegetable crops, however, were fairly satisfactory. It was costing the Company considerable to maintain the fort, and the Spaniards still claimed the land, and the American wave was approaching.

The coming of the Americans was given publicity by the arrest by the Mexican government of Isaac Graham, a trapper who had settled in California. It was heralded also by an edict, issued shortly after Graham's arrest, that all "foreigners" not married to California (Spanish) women were to be imprisoned.

Reports also came to the Russians that large wagon trains were being organized on the shores of the Missouri to enter California.

The officials could not blind themselves to the fact that Fort Ross stood in the road of American expansion.

Though engaged in Atlantic affairs, the United States government had been surprisingly alert as to what was happening on the Pacific. When the Russians founded Fort Ross, clarions were sounded in both St. Louis—starting-point of our western advance—and in Washington.

We take note of these things because we feel that the American people owe a debt to its early Minute Men who kept us from being hedged in on the south, west, and northwest.

An anonymous writer—probably that urgent expansionist Senator Benton—contributed to the St. Louis *Enquirer* a warning as to Russia's encroachments on California's coast.

"Their policy," he said, "is merely the extension of the policy of Peter the Great and Catherine. Alexander (the present Czar) is occupied with a scheme worthy of his vast ambition . . . the acquisition of the gulf and peninsula of California. . . . We learn this not from diplomatic correspondence, but from American fur-traders who learn it from the Russian traders now protected by the Emperor in carrying off our furs!"

President Monroe and Secretary Adams, composing the Doctrine, heard voices from the floor of the Congress, such as Representative Floyd's alarm as to Russia's invisible way of making herself felt in strategic places throughout the world:

"In the midst of her busy arrangements, she has not neglected the opportunity of possessing herself of two important stations on the American shore of the Pacific [Sitka and Fort Ross]; . . . she has found it expedient to occupy one of the Sandwich Islands, which enables her to command . . . the whole northern part of the Pacific Ocean."

The Russian minds that at first had found the Fort Ross locality so pleasant now began to discover its drawbacks. The site was crowned in the rear by a range of hills 1500 feet in height, covered with pines, firs, cedars, and laurel, rendering the position highly picturesque, but it was the meadows that counted, and these were deeply eroded.

The most fertile portions were hard to reach from the fort, and when grain began to ripen the summer fogs caused it to rust, while the squirrels from the woods, and the gophers from underground colonies, considered the work of the Russians a boon to them, and grew fat on the crops. In their little nibblings, the squirrels and gophers were taking revenge for the extermination of furry tribes by these Slavic hunters who had so strangely become farmers.

Americans had begun to settle within thirty miles of Fort Ross. They were even scouting along Russian River, and seemed to have no regard for property rights acquired from the Indians. It could be foreseen that this pushing people would overrun and take California. If they were not afraid to flout the powerful British, what regard would they have for weak Russian colonies? Perhaps they would even want the Company's stations in the North Pacific. It was understandable that Czar Nicholas had become uneasy as to the dangers of a clash in California that would have far-reaching effects.

They had evidence of the smartness of the Yankees in the arrival of the trapper-explorer James Ohio Pattie, who had come to California with a supply of vaccine against smallpox. When the plague swept the coast he had inoculated thousands of Mexicans and Indians, and the Russians paid him a hundred dollars to vaccinate the people of Fort Ross. It was marvelous how he enlarged his supply of virus from the inoculated patients.

Withdrawal from California seemed to be in the cards. However, the Company's original need of the fertile acres of Fort Ross as a bread-basket for New Archangel and Kodiak had ceased to exist when a treaty was made with the Hudson's Bay Company whereby provisions could be obtained from Vancouver Island.

Enduring these handicaps, the Company saw that the Fort Ross colony could not be successful in adequately providing food for the northern stations unless its grounds were expanded into the interior, upon land where American pioneers were settling.

Proposals to this effect were made to the Russian government, and it was asked to support the Company in its claims against encroachers on its site, but the vice-chancellor at St. Petersburg re-

fused to support the claims. Czar Nicholas had got himself into a difficult position, and was forced to adopt a policy of self-preservation for Russia. Fort Ross was not deemed important enough to risk international complications.

The Company, seeing the trend, tried to sell the property to the Hudson's Bay Company, but the British were not inclined to further provoke the United States by settling in the path of its western march.

Thus baffled, the Russians were glad when the enterprising Swiss pioneer, John A. Sutter, appeared on the scene and bought the property.

Sutter wanted the fort principally to obtain its cannon for his colony, Fort New Helvetia. It appeared that the Russian government, when glorying in Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, had sent to its lonely California outpost an armament of brass pieces and muskets found in the snows of the steppes after the panicky retreat of the French army. Sutter felt that the possession of this artillery would make him lord of his part of California.

It was part of the bad luck that followed the Company that, a few years after it had sold out, gold was found in the hills near Fort Ross.

Governor Rotchev and his wife grieved deeply over the relinquishment of Fort Ross. When word came to Madam Rotchev there that the new owner was dismantling the fort and shipping the property to his plantation in Sacramento Valley, she summed up the sentimental regret of the Russians in one pathetic plea:

"Do not, I pray you, destroy the glass-windowed conservatory facing the garden, in which I have spent so many happy hours."

Even that little vestige of Russian comfort and satisfaction was not permitted to remain, because, as Sutter explained in his apology to her, "having taken the building apart, my men could not restore it, as they did not understand the workmanship of Russian carpenters."

The Russians moved out of California just in time. A year later, the spectacular John C. Fremont entered the province and inspired its American settlers to insurrection. Having been threatened with expulsion by the Mexican authorities, they declared

their own little war to bring California under the American flag. With unbleached homespun, a strip of red flannel, and a painted design of a grizzly bear, they made and lifted the banner of the California republic. The Gringos' flag was laughed at by the Spanish governor, but the crude standard was prophetic of a quick raising of the Stars and Stripes.

## CHAPTER XXV

"THE SALMON SHALL drink blood!"

It was an ominous declaration by a Kolosh chief, and the occasion for it supplies a dramatic example of the white man's treatment of Kolosh women which infuriated Kolosh males.

The sensitive network of native tribes on the seacoast and up the rivers of Alaska surged and ebbed with the march of the governors. From the village of the Sitkan Kolosh, word spread up and down the coast and along the interior course of the rivers as to the coming and going of the Russian chiefs at Sitka.

Living along the shores were 6000 various tribesmen—all named Kolosh by the Russians—and when any of the tribes uprose, the people of Sitka remembered the first massacre and trembled. In 1851, during the governorship of Nikolai Rosenberg, great fright came from the murder of Derzhavin, commander of Fort Nulato, on the Lower Yukon. How foolish he had been in provoking the warlike chief Larion! The men in the clubhouse at Sitka, with their free notions as to morality, had found no fault with Derzhavin that he had been living with Larion's daughter, but why did he take a second daughter without making a satisfactory bargain with the chief?

"He had some English naval officer for his guest," one man said. "We have traditions of hospitality to maintain!"

"One can go too far with that—and, after all, why risk your life for an Englishman?"

The story that came to the people of Sitka after the massacre was that when Chief Larion returned from a hunt, he found his second daughter gone and went down to the fort.

Derzhavin had had enough experience to have been warned that he was creating a crisis. He had accompanied the gentle



creole explorer Glazanov when he made the first exploration of the Yukon region, and he had also gone with the considerate Lieutenant Zagoskin of the imperial navy when the latter charted the Lower Yukon and built the Nulato fort.

Chief Larion strode into the Commander's quarters. In the dusk of Derzhavin's room stood Larion's daughters, with beadwork in their hands. By the window, the English guest sat reading.

"One daughter was our agreement," said Chief Larion, "why have you taken a second one without sending the other back with payment for casting her off? I want one of my daughters."

Derzhavin's hand was on his gun. "Do you not see that I have a visitor—an officer of the strong British navy? I must make him comfortable. I have merely borrowed the second daughter."

The British officer stirred uneasily. This was more Derzhavin's idea than his own. He thought of interposing, but then he might offend the Russian who was so hospitable in offering a girl taken from the house of a chief.

"Yes," Derzhavin affirmed, "my visitor must have a concubine!"

Chief Larion turned and strode out. When beyond the stockade, he said to the waiting tribesmen, "The salmon shall have blood to drink before they go back to the sea."

His village was some distance away, on the banks of the Yukon. It was a peaceful place, and when he returned to it there was no thought among its people of going to war with the white men. In beautifully carved canoes, men were catching the silver salmon flashing thickly up the stream. Behind the totem-poles in front of the houses women and girls sat in groups, making shapely baskets or toying with the trinkets their men had got in exchange with the Russians at the trading-post.

Larion spoke, and his words were a call to war. The men left their fishing; the shamans put on their hideous masks; the warriors blackened and streaked their faces, and seized their crude weapons. Leaving the fluttering women, they took the trail.

Chief Larion's anger had not alarmed Derzhavin or his men. They had put their trust in the authority of the Russian flag; in

the brass cannon that projected from the embrasures; in their muskets. The families who had ventured to build houses beyond the stockade were not warned that there might be trouble. Men went fishing for salmon without extra precautions, and the sentry at the gate was not told to stay awake.

Laron went stealthily down the Yukon with his hundred warriors. They sighted a Russian with a dog-sled, and stealing up behind him, clubbed him to death. His blood was running to the salmon, but his flesh they cut in strips, roasted, and devoured.

They came to the three buildings, a half-mile from the stockade, which housed many Russian employes and their families. Night had fallen, and the flaring firebrands were not seen by the sleepers. The Indians set fire to the houses, and those dwellers not smothered by smoke were stabbed or clubbed to death.

A few young women were spared.

"The Russians have made slaves of our daughters," Larion said. "Their women will know what it is to be slaves to the Koyukans."

Pushing through the gate of the fort, they killed the sentry before he could make an outcry. Derzhavin had had his pleasure and was asleep. Larion slew him.

The English officer was reading. When the warriors sprang into the room, he rose, grasped his gun, and fired twice, but Larion struck the barrel upward and stabbed him in the stomach, killing him.

The survivors had barricaded themselves, and when an Indian fell from their musket-fire, the chief withdrew with his captives and plunder.

Terrified by the news of this massacre, and by a later attack on another fort, the people of Sitka pleaded for military protection, and the Governor of Okhotsk sent soldiers of the Siberian Battalion. This force for a time daunted the Sitka Kolosh, but four years later, though the battalion was still there, they attacked.

It had been a year of disturbance. At two outlying stations, the natives had murdered servants of the Company. The fair-grounds at Sitka, to which all the tribes had been invited, had provoked jealousy between tribes, and in the very sight of the town a com-

pany of visiting Stikines had been attacked, and thirty-five of them slain. About the same time occurred the devilish prank of a Kolosh who discovered several Stikine Indians in a Russian steam bath, and closed all the openings, so that the victims were steamed to death.

The attack on the Sitka stockade came suddenly. The Indians set upon a Russian sentry who was guarding the Company's woodpiles, and wounded him with spears. When the Governor sent word to the Indian village that the assailants must be given up, the chiefs sent him a defiant answer.

The crisis had come. The Governor walked to the fort's embrasure nearest the village and bade the cannoneer fire into the forest of totem-poles.

Swarming out of the village, the Kolosh stormed the fort, trying the embrasures, seeking a weak place. The muskets and cannon of the fort raked them, but they kept on.

There stood the little church the priests had induced the Company to build for them. On Sundays and holy days the Kolosh had crowded into it to watch the awesome ceremonies before the candle-lighted altar and ikons. Probably they wondered at the contradiction of being barred from the big church, yet given access here to the worship of the white man's God.

Now in their fury they saw only that its structure of logs made a strong fortress. Occupying it, they returned the fire from its windows, and held their ground for two hours. Had they possessed cannon, they would probably have repeated the first Sitkan massacre. It was not until the holy place was piled with their dead that they surrendered. They had lost close to a hundred warriors, while the Russians had lost only two lives, with nineteen men wounded.

This was the last serious Kolosh outbreak, but the colonists continued to live in fear, and years later a new governor in his report said that he intended to "strengthen the means of defending New Archangel from the attacks of the Kolosh—this sword of Damocles eternally threatens Sitka."

More enduring than the Russian governors of Alaska were the veterans who had become aged and disabled in the Company's

service. Pensioned by authority of the Crown, they had contentedly located themselves in and about the stations on the turbulent shores of Cook Inlet, among the no longer warlike Kenaitze.

Glad now were they that they had married native wives, because these knew the ways of the country and made life easier for them among the Kenaitze. They were adding to the little income by raising potatoes and turnips to trade for flesh or fish with the native hunters, and they were raising little Siberian cattle, and making butter by shaking the milk in bottles. Despite their decrepitude, they had become bear-fighters when necessary, guarding in the grass season their meager herds from plunges of huge brown bears.

Some of them would be living in Alaska after the Company's network had been torn apart, and its officials gone from the land.

## CHAPTER XXVI

AGAIN ARISES IN OUR story the irrepressible American, Perry McDonough Collins.

Among the projects of this spectacular person was one to lay a telegraph line between the old and new worlds—to connect Victoria, British Columbia, with the town of Nikolayefsk, which Muraviov had founded at the mouth of the Amur.

Supported by Muraviov, Collins had obtained the permission of the British and Russian governments to run the line through their territories, and had transferred these privileges to Hiram Sibley and Ezra Cornell, the organizers of the beginning Western Union Telegraph Company.

Sibley, a banker of North Adams, Massachusetts, had succeeded in getting an appropriation from the Congress to support the telegraph experiments of Samuel F. B. Morse, and with Cornell had formed the Western Union Telegraph Company. As president of the company, he built the transcontinental line and then dreamed of a line to Europe via Bering Strait and Siberia.

Competitor Cyrus West Field, the Stewart drygoods clerk who had won the backing of Peter Cooper and other capitalists in laying a transatlantic cable, had organized his company ten years before, but the project of a line under the Atlantic seemed impos-

sible, and the investors in the northern line expected him to fail.

In the winter of 1854, Colonel Charles S. Bulkeley, a capable engineer employed by Sibley, arrived in San Francisco to prepare for surveying and testing several thousand miles of wild country on both sides of the Bering Sea. Poles for telegraph wires were to be put up in Arctic regions, and the tribes of the country conciliated.

Of the hundreds who clamored for employment, Bulkeley chose young men. "They can endure more," he explained, "and they have greater perseverance. Besides, whatever honors or benefits shall accrue from completing the work, I want the young men of our country to have."

The company was divided into several parties, the main one of which set forth to cover two thousand miles of Siberia. Its commander was a Russian officer, Major Abasa, who was aided by Captain James Mahood, Captain George Kennan (who later became the famous journalist), and Richard J. Bush, who wrote a book about his experiences.

When Bush's party came to far Oudskoi on the Uda River, at the Okhotsk Sea, they found that this bay had been a "gamming place" for American whalers. These mariners, whom Herman Melville took as characters for *Moby Dick*, had created a market at the little summer village of Chimikan, at the mouth of the Uda. To it the Tunguse and half-breed Russians brought furs and fresh meat to exchange for liquors, calico, tobacco, and trinkets.

Bush discovered in this way the influence of our whalers on the natives:

As he was seated in one of the native huts, smoking his pipe after tea, a little Tungusian boy began to sing. The song startled him: surely he was detecting in the grunted melody and the mangled words an American marching tune:

"John Brown's body lies amoldering in his grave,  
John Brown's body lies amoldering in his grave,  
John Brown's body lies amoldering in his grave  
As we go marching on!"

Russia was marching across the Pacific, and the United States

was venturing for practical science into Siberia, and a native boy, a pupil of the Yankee whalers, was singing a song for the marchers!

Soon the newly arrived Americans were dancing as the Yankee whalers had danced before them. Their partners were four homely peasant women—wives of the Cossacks. In a room ten feet square, with rows of benches around the walls, they smiled and chatted uncomprehensibly.

The fun began with the inevitable drinking of tea, prepared by the Cossacks, and then the Cossacks played one of their lively national airs. The puzzled Americans made brave attempts to join. Suddenly the women leaped into the center of the room, waving handkerchiefs. It dawned upon the visitors that the challenging rags were invitations to the dance. As Bush hesitated, one of the wives pulled him to her.

The Americans struggled to catch the rhythm of the jumps. Their buxom partners sang as they leaped and swayed, and their eyes danced too. The embarrassed Bush wondered what he was in for.

The wives were exhaustless, but the tough Americans were ready to drop. The music stopped but the ordeal was not over. A buxom breast was heaving close to Bush, and a bovine gaze was inviting him. Since lips were smacking all about him, he knew that he was safe, and gave her a good bussing.

Then came drinks of diluted alcohol, then more tea. While he was glancing at his companions with an idea of escaping, the four women leaped into the center of the floor again, and waved their handkerchiefs at new prospects. And so the night of agony went on.

When the linesmen arrived among these natives, they heard much of a rich Yakute cattle merchant named Solavaov, whose place would be the next stop.

To reach his place they were forced to journey reindeer-back in weather below zero. At times the reindeer stumbled in snow seven feet deep, and the riders stumbled along on foot. To mount again was difficult, but Bush managed to climb a sapling and drop from it on to the animal's back.

They came at last to the Arla River and saw ahead a grove of larch trees under which a group of buildings rose from the snow. This place was the *yourt* of Solavaov, whose business of cattle-raiser was indicated by many large haystacks jutting up from the snow.

The quiet little cattleman was discovered to be a proud fellow who had good reason to puff out his breast, for had not the Czar himself paid him a signal honor during the Crimean War?

Hearing that the Russian troops on the Amur River were badly in need of provisions, he drove a large herd of cattle a long distance to the place of encampment, and sold them to the commissary department at a price so low as to be sensational. The general in command, when told of the Yakute's generosity, stopped his battle-planning long enough to write a letter to the Czar about Solavaov; and what should come along from Moscow but a large handsome coat, brilliantly adorned with gold and silver lace and fringe, and with a medal besides!

"Put it on, Solavaov," said the admiring guests.

"Ah, that I cannot do," said the cattle merchant. "You see, I am a small man, and the Czar's tailor must have measured me by the size of my deed, rather than by my real height. If I put it on, the tails of it would drag in the dirt, and that would be a great dishonor to the Emperor's gift. So, I keep it carefully locked up, and I only bring it out to show how kind is His Majesty, and how thoughtful are his commanders."

A meal was served, and now the travelers were treated to a surprise that caused them to bless the American ship cooks who had taught the cooks of Solavaov. Forth came a large dish of old-fashioned, steaming-hot griddle-cakes, with an abundance of fresh milk and tea.

On three sides of the big room were bunks that served as seats by day and beds by night. Men and women and children, guests and the household, slept on these bunks and overflowed on the floor.

It was an awkward prospect for the shy young traveler Bush, who had found the Tunguse girls curious about his dress, and alarmingly inviting. Here is his confession:

"As we entered one of the huts, our attention was directed to a Tungusian lass, upon whose coffee-colored brow about eighteen winters had left their impress, and whose slight and graceful figure, and large, gazelle eyes, proclaimed her to be the belle of the community. . . .

"It was that first night at Solavaov's, and the floor of the *yourt* was literally strewn with piles of deerskins covering the prostrate forms of sleeping natives. My companions had already retired to the bunks allotted them, while I sat at a small wooden table writing up my journal of the day's events.

"It was a curious sight to see all ages, sizes, and sexes strewn promiscuously about the room, and, not being accustomed to such a state of affairs, I naturally waited until all should be asleep before commencing my preparations to retire.

"At last the whole apartment resounded with the snores and snorts of the household and, quietly laying down my journal, I began noiselessly to undress. But horror! My coat was hardly off, when, happening to glance toward the floor, I beheld the large soft black eyes of the 'belle' peering at me from beneath an enormous pile of deerskins."

Our proper young American lit his pipe and resumed smoking, hoping that the girl would go to sleep. Hours passed, but every time he began to strip to red flannel, the girl's eyes shone at him as brightly as ever.

"At length," he wrote, "I could endure it no longer, and was forced to retreat ignominiously to my blankets, and there, shielded from her view by a double thickness of hairskins, to divest myself of the remainder of my outer clothing lying flat on my back."

Sailing from there to the mouth of the Amur, and up that magnificent river; then following routes made by the early Cossacks in Siberia; mingling with the Tunguse and Chukchi tribes; traveling by dog, reindeer and horse trains; wintering in bleak isolation—the surveyors at last came together at Camp Macrae on the Anadyr.

There came a bark flying the colors of the employing company. It brought the stunning news that the laying of the Atlantic cable



was a success and that there was no more need to lay a telegraph line to the old world via Bering Strait.

Bush spoke thus for the bitterly disappointed men:

"The enterprise was looked upon as a great national undertaking, and one that would do credit to any nation. To construct a telegraph line for upward of seven thousand miles through a wild and hitherto unexplored territory, among savage tribes, and that too, for the greater portion of the way through an arctic region, where the severest cold had to be endured, together with innumerable other privations, was an enterprise we all felt a pride to be enlisted in; and now that the walls were scaled—the greater part of the suffering gone through with, and the heaviest obstacles overcome—to see our pet project abandoned was by no means gratifying."

Ferdinand Westdahl, who was one of the party which surveyed the coast of Norton Sound, was not aware until months later that the work had stopped:

"We lay at Unalakleet until February, when we went into the field and continued to work on the line, putting up some 30 miles—the posts only, for we had no wire. The country is a complete bog. If you dig down on the hills there two feet, you strike ice."

For many years afterward the unwired poles straggled across stretches of Arctic country—the only relics of the work upon which three million dollars had been spent. The Tunguse, seeing the ships of the white men sail away, made much talk in their gatherings about the strange men from the south who were so wonderful with their inventions, but who were also very puzzling in that they planted bare poles in the tundra to guide the tribes from village to village. Why had not the white men's God of Wisdom made known to them that the Tunguse and the Chukchi had since the beginning of time known how to travel through the treeless and untracked immensities of the north?

## WHAT SECRETARY SEWARD DID NOT SEE

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### CHAPTER XXVII

THE RUSSIAN GOVERNORS fade from sight, and the Archduke Constantine and Baron Stoeckl, Russian minister in Washington, show their hands, and the informed Senator Sumner begins to prepare a historical oration about the value of Alaska to the United States.

All the information drifting to Sitka was ominous of the end of the Company. The people there shuddered at the news that the British were planning a great fur monopoly that would take over both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian-American Company. They were glad when the Governor assured them that the Emperor would never let the Pacific colonies fall into British hands. As to the outstretching fingers of Uncle Sam—that was another matter.

The year 1860 brought in a period of pins-and-needles for the Company's administrators. They had submitted to the Czar's Minister of Finance a draft for a new charter which would run for twenty years from January, 1862.

San Franciscans were receiving their first Pony Express mail in 1860, but the Russians in Sitka were receiving no news—only rumors. Americans were thronging into California, and the countries of Europe were pouring fortune-hunters into its cities, but in Sitka there were less than five hundred Russians, men and women, and in the last three years only fourteen ships had arrived from the old country.

The chief topic over the card-tables of the Sitkan clubhouse was, "Has the government really turned its back on the Company? Will it sell Russian America?"

The advocates of charter renewal rehearsed their case:

We have just passed through the Golden Age of the Company. Its revenues have improved, its holdings broadened. True, Fort Ross had been given up, and the Crown did not send warships and soldiers to expel the Hudson's Bay Company from the fort Scotsman Alexander Murray built on the Yukon in Russian territory, but there were, of course, the usual European complications. Despite the fur war on the Yukon, there was still plenty of room for profitable commerce.

"We are conserving the seals," officials argued, "and working to restore sea-otter life, and we're transporting prolific foxes to islands where there are none. All the rich fur country of the great Yukon is yet to be exploited. There are shores, valleys, and rivers in Russian territory the Company has not yet had time to reap. As for mineral wealth, has not the mining engineer Dorovin showed that in lands of the Company there is gold, coal, graphite, and marble? Why, our new steamboats are being fueled by Company coal!

"Even if the Company is useless, nay dangerous, as a tool of expansion, would the Emperor throw away an organization second only to the Hudson's Bay Company in the trade of the world? Would he stop an enterprise that in its life has shipped out four million furs? The prolific, valuable seals and the incalculable schools of salmon, halibut, and herring—would they go to feed Russia's rivals—the people of Canada or the United States?"

Captain Golovnin, the perennial inspector, was among them again. For all his grumbling, he gave the advocates of retention

some comfort. He said that he would recommend that the charter be renewed.

They waited and waited, and when information came at last it was vexing. That upstart Kashevarov, the creole the Company had elevated to power! How audacious he was to dispute Golovnin's report. Who was he to be a champion of labor, saying that the workers were still being exploited and abused? It went to his head to be lifted from the people! Could it be possible that the trouble-maker was getting a hearing? Yes, the directors had called in Baron Wrangell to give his opinion in the controversy.

They waited in worry for the next ship, and were furious at Wrangell when the news came. He had supported the creole against Golovnin, and the Crown was imposing expensive reforms on the Company which it was not satisfied to accept.

The year 1862 came and the charter was not renewed. Two years later Prince Maksoutov came, acting for the Crown, and showed his orders to take over the Company's affairs.

While Prince Maksoutov was bringing out his gracious young wife and his sturdy youngsters, the Minister of Finance at St. Petersburg was writing to Baron Edward de Stoeckl about ceding Russia-America.

It had been fitting for Peter the Great to explore the possibilities of a province across the Pacific, but these were new times, and the Czar must be realistic. The brilliant Governor-General Muraviov had provided the advantageous Amur route to the Pacific, which was clearly the destiny of Russia. Her business in the future was to control or at least hold her own in the teeming markets of China and Japan, and not to contend with the British and the Yankees for a fur trade that was vanishing, or for gold mines that would soon be worked out.

Except England, all nations that had acquired colonies in America had lost them, and England was finding it difficult to people her northwestern holdings in the face of the American march. How could Russia hope to maintain her meager colonies forever? If war came, how could she protect a large stretch of the American coast? If the Yankees closed the Pacific ports to Russian shipping, the colonies would starve and their trade vanish.

The Baron, the Minister of Finance advised, should tell Secretary Seward that the Russian crown recognized the manifest destiny of the United States. As for the British negotiations, Russia did not wish the English to possess the land across from Kamchatka as a springboard into Siberia.

Thus authorized, Baron Stoeckl began the discussions, and at four o'clock on the morning of March 31, 1867, when final instructions had been received by cable from Archduke Constantine, the cession of Russian America to the United States was signed by Seward and Stoeckl.

The network of trade, the concealed filaments of empire so arduously woven by Rezanov, Shelikov, Baranov, Wrangell and others to embrace Alaska, Oregon, California, and Hawaii was to be torn apart by the keels of United States naval and merchant vessels.

The honor of dignifying "Seward's Ice-Box" by a noble name went to Sumner, since the public approved of the title he proposed in the Senate in 1867:

"As these extensive possessions, constituting a corner of the continent, pass from the Imperial Government of Russia, they will naturally receive a new name. How shall they be called? . . . The name should come from the country itself. It should be indigenous, aboriginal, one of the autochthons of the soil.

"Happily such a name exists, which is as proper in sound as in origin. It appears from the report of Cook, the illustrious navigator, that the euphonious name now applied to the peninsula which is the continental link of the Aleutian chain was the sole name used originally by the native islanders when speaking of the American continent in general, which they knew perfectly well to be a great land. It only remains that, following these natives, whose places are now ours, we too shall call the Great Land—Alaska."

Let us return for a moment to young Martin Stroganov, the fisherman we introduced at Sitka early in our book. Representative of the coming employes of American trading companies, he was talking now to Captain Gustav Niebaum, who had bought

his way with sealskins into partnership in Hutchinson's newly formed company.

"Certainly we will give you a job," Niebaum assured Martin. "We will be fortunate if all the men we employ are half as good as you."

Martin hesitated. Still in his ears were the complaints of the minor Russian officials who had been hurriedly ousted from their houses by the American officers. He looked up at the American flag.

"Do you really think I will be happy if I apply for citizenship under the new banner?"

"You will be very happy in the end," Niebaum said. "No other country on God's earth gives a new citizen such opportunities. Being a mixed and sociable people, the Americans welcome other races who want to work along with them. I have mingled with the Californians; I have drunk in San Francisco with Yankees, Southerners, Scots, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, Dutchmen and Portuguese; I have watched them quarreling with each other and yet getting along together. Yes, you and I can get along here."

Martin shook his head.

"These soldiers swarming over town; getting drunk; insulting the creoles; debauching the Kolosh women—one doesn't feel like falling in with them."

"Soldiers on the loose; a commander who doesn't understand the Indians and is weak in discipline. Too bad they sent an Army of Occupation. But this will pass and good men will come. The government will discover that all it needs to keep order along these coasts is a naval ship.

"I'm glad you asked me for a job. I can give you one in a good place—the seal rookeries.

"Don't look so disappointed. Things have improved in the Seal Islands since we took over from the Russians. We believe that if we look after our help, and keep them healthy and contented, we will make more money. Along with the other improvements, we'll build you a snug house, and pay good wages. We have plans to support a church and to bring in a schoolteacher. It'll be hard going for a few months, but more pleasant than it is here

just at this time. And you'll still be under the American flag. I repeat—it's a good place to start your citizenship, for the government is going to work with us in protecting both the native people and the seals."

Martin Stroganov took the job; and when Natalya with her baby in her arms, and he with Martin, Junior, clinging to his hand went ashore among the welcoming Aleuts on St. Paul Island, the couple felt that employer Niebaum had given them good advice.

Bitter as the little independent traders of San Francisco had been against the Yankee capitalists who had got ahead of them at Sitka, they freely admitted that promoter Hutchinson had been a fair dealer and a capable organizer. "He thinks in a big way," they said.

Captain Ebenezer Morgan was associating his interests with those of Hutchinson. With Captain Niebaum directing the work, the Hutchinson and Morgan group had staked and defended their seal claims as if they were miners in the gold diggings.

"This," said Niebaum, "is glossy-brown floating gold, and it comes every year, and, if we're careful it will never give out; but if we permit reckless slaughter to continue, the seals will go the way of the sea-otters."

"Yes," said Captain Morgan, "I've seen herds of millions dwindle to almost zero in the Antarctic."

After the first year, the three leaders petitioned the Congress to declare the rookeries a government reservation, and to prohibit any or all parties from taking seals from them until the Congress gave consent. A conservation law was passed, with a provision in it that the sealing rights be leased to the responsible person or firm who put in the highest bid.

The prospective lease of the sealing rights had created almost as much excitement in Washington as had the matter of sanctioning the purchase of Alaska. Groups of promoters with their lobbyists contended bitterly for the franchise.

The Secretary of the Treasury had advertised for bids, and one was submitted by Louis Goldstone, who represented three Cali-

fornia groups. Because one of his clients—the Russian Commercial Company—withdrew when the bids were about to be opened, the Treasury Department threw out the entire Goldstone bid.

When Hutchinson's group showed that it had the capital, the personnel, the experience, and the public spirit to carry out effectively the conditions of the lease, it was given the contract, with the exclusive right to take 100,000 sealskins annually from the Pribilofs. The Company was to work with government bureaus in improving the living conditions of the native workers.

Goldstone made furious protests. The opponents presented a common front under the impressive names, "Alaska Traders' Protective Association" and the "Anti-Monopoly Association of the Pacific Coast," and circulated their case through the halls of the Congress by a pamphlet, "History of the Wrongs of Alaska." Unfortunately for them, the writer of the pamphlet later confessed that the charges of fraud and oppression of natives were cooked up by him while in the employ of the A.M.A.O.T.P.C.

Had the Congressional sub-committee of inquiry called worker Martin Stroganov to testify, he would have told that when he first arrived at the Seal Islands—the Pribilofs, St. Paul and St. George—the empty native huts that stood as relics of the Russian rule were damp, dark, and filthy. The seal-fat used for fuel had covered the walls and ceiling with greasy, black soot. The crowded dwellers in them got their warmth from driftwood, and when it was used up in winter, huddled together beneath skins. Deaths were many.

The new company of Americans, however, was moving the miserable natives out of their barracoons into new sanitary quarters. If the worker's testimony had been taken a few years after the granting of the new charter, he could tell of the two neat villages on the islands, and how every laborer lived in a neat frame dwelling, lined with tarred paper, painted, and furnished with a stove. The Aleuts, he could say, were proud of the new luxury—the privy.

There was a church on each island, a hospital on St. Paul, and skilled doctors on both islands. Teachers paid by the Company taught in the schoolhouses eight months of the year. The Com-



missioner on Indian Affairs could find no wrongs committed against the natives, who indeed were called by their brothers in the south "the rich Aleuts."

Over in London, the center of fur fashions, the furriers began to talk about the improvement of furs coming from the Pribilofs.

"If this keeps on," they said to one another, "it will pay us to make sealskin sacks the fashion."

The improvement continued, and the price of Alaskan sealskins doubled, trebled, quadrupled. It was good business for Uncle Sam, for he received increasing revenues in taxes and royalties under the contract.

Two years after the purchase of Alaska, Secretary Seward paid a visit to the territory. Some people still called the region "Wal-russia" and "Seward's Folly," but the ridicule was dying away. The impressive senatorial voice of Sumner had convinced most Americans that Alaska was worth owning and would pay for itself.

After years of terrific responsibility, Seward looked forward to the discomforts of a visit to Alaska via San Francisco as a relief and refreshment, but it annoyed him when reporter Del Norte, of the *Alta California*, found his nook in the San Francisco hotel.

However, Seward was in a friendly, after-dinner mood, and the reporter had just enough diffidence to be appealing. He had the advantage, too, of having covered the ceremony of transfer at Sitka. The Secretary had read his account with interest and showed it to Senator Sumner.

"Mr. Secretary," Del Norte asked, "has the controversy in Washington over the Alaskan purchase run its course?"

"Yes, the debate over sealing rights has submerged the agitation about the transfer."

"Mr. Secretary, some Congressmen said that the President, or his representative, had no right to use the public money for the purchase of Alaska without the vote of the Congress."

"You keep well informed. They had some grounds for what they said, but I had sounded out Sumner and other influential senators and representatives, and knew that the Congress would sanction the purchase."

"If I had gone openly to the Congress, the matter would have become one of public debate in advance of the cession. There would have been accusations and ridicule and the Russian government would probably have taken offense and stopped the sale. Then the Hudson's Bay Company might have renewed its lease on the valuable strip along the British Columbia coast, and Great Britain might have made an attractive bid for the entire territory. Certainly the Canadian interests were wakening."

"They say you acted with undue haste in signing the treaty at four A.M."

"I do not apologize for that. When Baron Stoeckl sent word to me that Grand Duke Constantine had cabled to him to accept the price, quick action was necessary. I was playing whist, but I asked the Baron to come over, and called my secretaries, and cleared the cards off the table, and then we went to it. Well, young man, the Congress has ratified the purchase, and it's now figuring the royalties from the sealing-rights, so it has worked out satisfactorily all around."

"I suppose you wouldn't want to be quoted with matters concerning the \$7,200,000 price? There's a good deal of whispering about that."

"I will at least hear your question."

"Well, it is rumored that the Baron wanted the price set high enough to include the expenses of the Russian warships which gave us moral support in the war by coming to New York and San Francisco."

"I have nothing to say as to that."

"There has been much wonderment caused by a public utterance of the Baron's: 'I am sick of the corruption of American Congressmen and other public men, and it is to be hoped that they will some day be worthy of the country they represent.'"

"A shocking statement, Mr. Del Norte. I know of no reason for his saying it. I believe some newspaper men received money from some source to write articles favorable to the purchase. The money was wasted."

"Won't you give my paper your own ideas as to the significance of the purchase?"

"You may say that the State Department has long had in mind

the acquisition of Alaska as part of a larger plan of expansion on the Pacific. Much of the future of the United States appears to be in the Pacific. The treaty we have made with Hawaii has given our merchant vessels free access to its harbors, and thereby, our trade with the Orient will develop richly.

"Hawaii is an excellent rendezvous for our naval ships—I have especially in mind the maritime advantages of the island of Oahu. American residents in Hawaii have been urging annexation, and this may come. Keep your eyes on that island kingdom, Mr. Del Norte."

"Is it true what some of your opponents said—that the accessible wealth of Alaska is almost exhausted?"

Seward grew oratorical, rehearsing the speech he was to make at Sitka:

"Mr. Sumner, in his elaborate and magnificent oration, has not exaggerated—no man can exaggerate—the marine treasures of the territory. Besides the whale—which everywhere and at all times is seen enjoying his robust exercise—the sea-otter, the fur-seal, the hair-seal, and the walrus are found in those waters which imbosom the western islands. Those waters teem with salmon, cod, and other fishes that support human and animal life."

"What, Mr. Seward, do you consider the most important measure of your political career?"

"The purchase of Alaska, sir, but it will take the people a generation to find it out."

The interview was over. Del Norte went back to his office well pleased, but one question kept popping up. The island of Oahu—why was Secretary Seward especially interested in it?

Clever as the reporter was, he had not the gift of prescience, and he did not foresee that to future Americans Oahu would mean Pearl Harbor.

Secretary Seward was immensely heartened by his visit to Alaska, though he lamented that disorderly adventurers had been recruited for the regiment of occupation. Perhaps it would be well to recommend that the Navy and the Revenue Cutter Service be given the duty of patrol. Certainly something must be done to remove settlers' fears of Indian attacks. It was an offense

against the pride of the United States that the people of Alaska must call on British warships at Vancouver to protect them from Kolosh onslaughts.

Gazing seaward from the guard-walk around Baranov Castle, Seward's farness of sight could not reach to the momentous present. He did not dream that, three-quarters of a century later, the fog-womb of the North Pacific would hatch the greatest threat to the United States. Disposed to be condescending to Japan, he could never imagine its little men stealing across the Aleutians under cover of the mists to hole themselves in like the little Aleutian beasts whose names had been given to Fox and Rat Islands.

Planner of a larger navy, Seward was not born late enough to have the thrill of seeing a magnificent avenging armada of American battleships, cruisers and flat-tops, with shining wings above them, leaving ports of the North Pacific to crush the enemy.

How immensely more would he have been thrilled if it had been given to him to see the United States and Canada working brotherly together to push a highway for war materials up difficult coasts; yes, even projecting that the highway should continue, by incredible inventions, across the Strait to Siberia.

Tremendously thrilling would it have been for the Secretary to have foreheard, in the very Congress where the purchase of Alaska had been ridiculed, thoughtful legislators declaring the military importance of Alaska, and advocating that the Territory be given Statehood, and funds and facilities so that she would always be unconquerable as the chief fortress of our Pacific Coast.

Seward would die, but his watchful ghost would be heeding when Billy Mitchell, of the United States Signal Corps, came along.

Billy was to receive his first training for air warfare in the fields of Alaska. Early informed as to the air plans and air fleets of the big nations of the world, Billy was anxiously concerned about the fate of Seward's Alaska. Thinking about the Asiatic problems so near to our Alaskan frontiers, he said:

"The future of Russia is in the air. This propaganda is being

disseminated through the Arctic among the Eskimos, Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Arctic Siberia to the shores of the Pacific. Alaska and the Aleutians is the essential fortress of our country."

General H. H. Arnold, Chief of Air Corps, U.S. Army, has recently been flying over Alaska and the Aleutians, visiting people of near and remote parts, who told him that the airplane had made the most of Alaska habitable. He went among American fliers living in the cold fogs, and shared their temporary fields laid in snow and mud.

He assured the people of Alaska that Uncle Sam would hustle improvements in air bases, radio beacons, weather stations—for war use and for civil air commerce.

"Those facilities," he said, "lie along the logical air routes from the Far East to the industrial centers of the United States. They are the airways of the future."

It is part of the satisfaction of the historian that he can link the statesman and prophet of one era with those leaders who later take action upon their judgments. Both Seward and Mitchell spoke in President Roosevelt's Bremerton address of August 12, 1944:

"You who live in the Pacific Northwest have realized that a line for sea and air navigation following the Great Circle course from Puget Sound to Siberia and northern China passed very close to the Alaskan coast and thence westward along the line of the Aleutian Islands. From the point of view of national defense, therefore, it is essential that our control of this route shall be undisputed. Everybody in Siberia and China knows that we have no ambition to acquire land on the Continent of Asia. We, as a people, are utterly opposed to aggression or sneak attacks—but, we as a people, are insistent that other nations must not, under any circumstance, through the foreseeable future commit such attacks against the United States. Therefore, it is essential that we be fully prepared to prevent them for all time to come. The word and honor of Japan can not be trusted."

In the light of this Age of Air and Radio, it will be seen that the Russian march to the Pacific has made her a mighty "Great

Circle" neighbor of the United States. In the postwar world, she will have unmatched air accessibility to the crowded and backward markets of the Far East which we will want to improve, and do business with. Russia's relations with China and Japan will always be important concerns of the United States.

Fortunately, there are no land boundaries or needs of raw materials to provoke quarrels between us, but ideologies can be pricking swords, and since we have been already hurt by the penetrations of Russian Communism, we will want to be shown that all that is definitely at an end.

The bridge of friendship we have built as war Allies must stand the test of a strange language; the mystery of the Asiatic element in her blood; the secrecy of her leaders; and the present Russian policy of not informing the people as to the real nature of life in the United States, and the virtues that have made it possible for us to be the happiest, freest, and most generous people on earth.

Meditating upon these things, we recall the shout *Horosho! Horosho!* (Good! Good!) which the friendly Siberian notables gave in response to the toast of our exuberant American Collins, Commercial Agent to the Amur.

It is an expression of pleasure which we hope our country may have many occasions to cry to the Russians after the present collaborative period has officially passed.

For love of country, for keenness to defend the motherland, for regard for freedom and justice—*Horosho!*

For respecting and protecting these qualities in weak little border nations—*Horosho!*

For as little as possible of the craft and force of Rezanov and Muraviov, and for generous showings of the spirit of Korff: "Power lies in love, not in force!"—*Horosho!*

For ending forever all meddling with the American way of life, *Horosho!*

For a purpose to settle future Russian-American problems of land, sea, or air by open conferences and scrupulously-kept covenants—many *Horoshos!*

THE END

## BOOKS THAT AIDED THIS BOOK

WE WERE FORTUNATE in finding at the outset the works of Professor R. J. Kerner: *The Urge to the Sea; Russian Expansion to America* (bibliography); and *Northeastern Asia* (bibliography). We were equally fortunate in having at hand the late F. A. Golder's two volumes, *Bering's Voyages*, published by the American Geographic Society, containing an excellent bibliography and reference notes.

We found Hubert Howe Bancroft's *History of Alaska, 1730-1885*, rich in references and information. What a glutton for facts was Bancroft! He sent a Russian scholar on three separate journeys to Alaska to gather verbal information from persons of historical note still living there, and employed assistants who spent years making abstracts of materials in Sitka, San Francisco, and Washington. In Russia, leading officials and men of letters aided him.

Indebted to public libraries, especially the New York Public Library, we are also indebted to book-sellers, and we thank especially Henry Clapp Smith of Duttons, Inc., for finding us needed books.

It was interesting to discover that British writers, concerned with the continual rivalry between their country and Russia, had followed Russia's march to the Pacific more intently than had American travelers and writers. Valuable guidance came to us from these older British works:

The Russian Vladimir's *Russia on the Pacific and The Siberian Railway*, written in English;

A. R. Colquhoun's *Overland to China*;

M. P. Price's *Siberia*;

R. G. Latham's *Native Races of the Russian Empire*;

William Robertson's *Russian Discoveries*.

William Coxe's *Account of the Russian Discoveries Between Asia and America*.

Krashenunikov's *History of Kamchatka*, and Benyovski's *Memoirs and Travels*.

As to Czars and Czarinas, we were aided by the biographies of K. Waliszewski, *Peter the Great* and *Catherine II of Russia*; R. N. Bains' *The First Romanovs*; Stephen Graham's *Ivan IV, the Terrible*; W. M. Gerhardt's *The Romanovs*; and William Tooke's *History of Russia from Rurik to Catherine*.

As to older American books and documents, we were happy to discover our character Del Norte, San Francisco newspaper reporter of the Sixties, in a volume of clippings in the New York Public Library relating to Alaska. It was encouraging also to find in Mendoza's old-book store, the pleasant narratives by telegraph linesman Richard J. Bush, and by our breezy Commercial Agent to the Amur, Perry McDonough Collins.

Among later writers, we are particularly indebted to these:  
Andrews, Clarence, *The Story of Alaska*  
Arnold, General H. H., *Our Air Frontiers* (National Geographic Magazine)

Beveridge, Albert F., *The Russian Advance*

Bolton, H. E., and Adam, D. A., *California's Story*

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We are indebted to Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to use the extract from Bret Harte's poem "An Arctic Vision."

For courteously advising us as to Russian spelling we thank Avrahm Yarmolinski, Director of the Slavonic Division of the New York Public Library.



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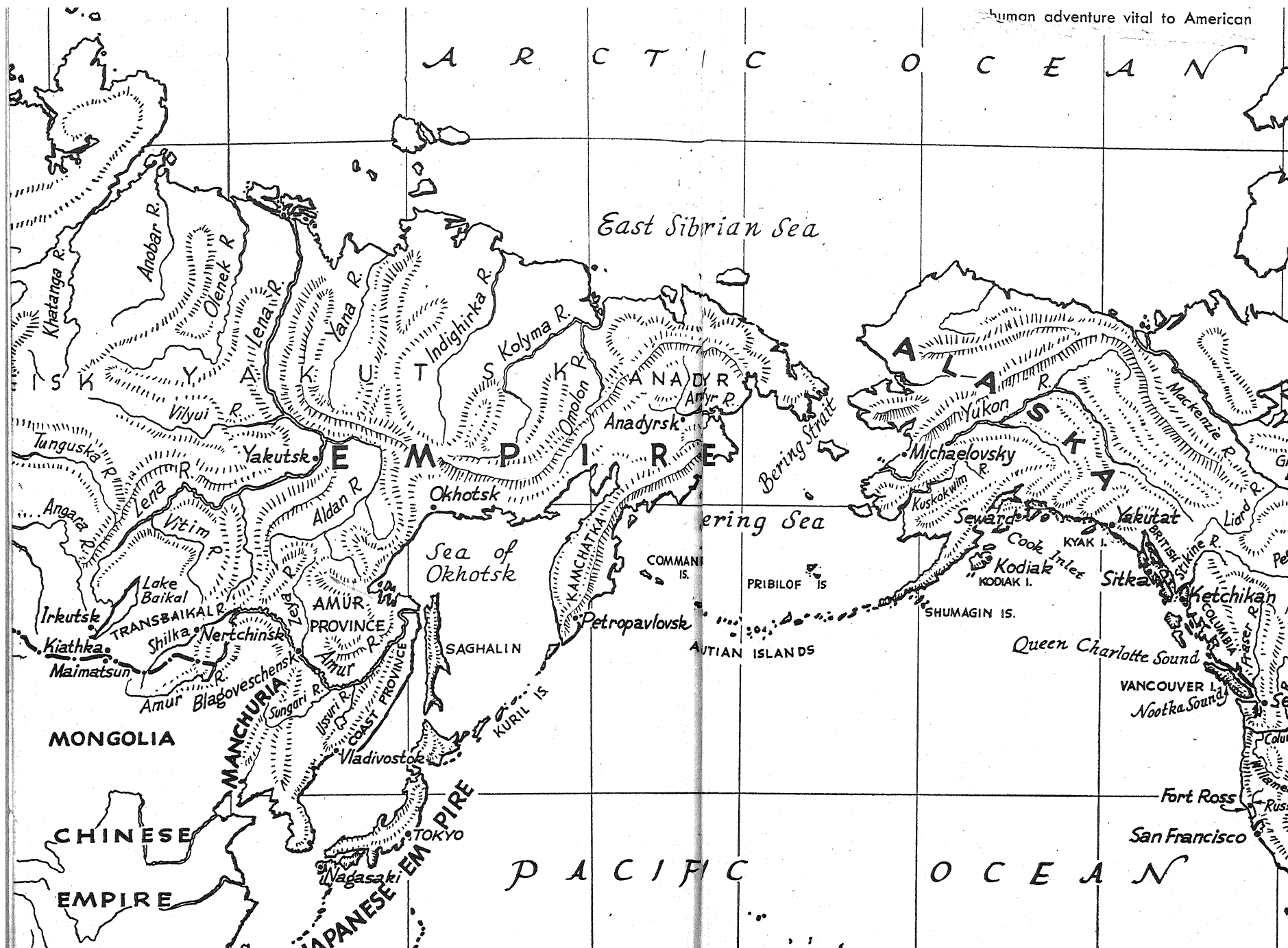
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